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Chaotic Journey to a New Perspective: A Performance Thesis

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CHAOTIC JOURNEY TO A NEW PERSPECTIVE
A Performance Thesis

Felicia L. Kelley

Mentor:
Professor Chad Michael Hall

In partial fulfillment of
The Bachelor of Arts Degree in Dance
Loyola Marymount University

May 7, 2010

CHAOTIC JOURNEY TO A NEW PERSPECTIVE

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CHAPTER 1: The Dance

Title: Standing in the Middle of Chaos... This Could Be Your Finest Hour

Choreographer: Ursula Payne

Description: This dance represents the transition from the fast-paced life of a young adult to the moment of maturity where speed bumps and roadblocks in life cause you to slow down, take a step back and really observe what is happening around you. In the opening of the dance we are one unit that stays closely knit though each of us have our own agenda within the group. As the momentum begins to build some people have moments in which they begin to break away from the group, yet they always return. We are “young punks” seemingly going through life without a care. We race through life at warp speed, not taking the time to notice what is going on around us but simply living freely. Never do we stop to realize the affects that our actions have on those around us. Relationships are not a priority, because we do not recognize that they could be taken away in an instant.

Each of us begins to enter and exit the stage in packs of 2 or 3, at first doing movement in unison and then breaking into cannons or variations of the set movement. Everyone begins to re-enter, the music builds, as the movement becomes stronger and bolder. As the piece progresses we start making our own statements of individualism, using the greatest amount of force and energy possible so we can ensure that we are heard.

Just as we begin to race out of control reaching the highest intensity of our movement, one-by-one we are snapped out of our individual moments of chaos into observation and stillness. We must take a step back and look at the relationships we have established. We begin to re-connect with one another, and realize that we are all migrating towards a common end. Five dancers begin to cross over into their next lives, and become separated from those whom they have left behind. As the dance comes to a close these five continue to watch over the others, as they accept their current circumstance. The piece comes to a somber end as the final dancer accepts her reality, saying goodbye to those who remain in her life as she joins the few whom have gone before her

Music: *Bornlivedie; Signify; Wake as Gun I*; Porcupine Tree

Length: 8:41

Dancers:	Lauren Cannon	Suzy Myre
	Jesse Chin	Erin Stover
	Miesha Gantz	Heather Ursulum
	Jhia Jackson	Paul Vickers
	Edward Jenkins	Amber Waterford (<i>understudy</i>)
	Felicia Kelley	

My Role: I was a member of the ensemble. In the opening of the dance I stayed connected to the larger group of dancers. As people began to break away from the group, I maintained a solid relationship with the community that we created. Our job was to create a solid, safe place of return for those who broke away from the group, having a moment to declare their individuality. I have a duet with Jesse Chin, which serves as our entrance after all of the small groups of two or three have re-entered the space to declare their state of egoism.

As we converge into the large group and begin to break off into our own solos, I am the last to begin my individual phrase. As the music builds in intensity each person begins to “snap out of it” and observe the chaos that is happening around them. I am left alone completing my phrase, spinning out of control while the others are slowly drawn toward the hole left by the pathway of my movement. I suddenly stop as the music reaches an abrupt end, collapsing to the floor and initiating a change in the tone of the piece.

I rejoin the community as we are carefully brought down to a gentler speed, observing those who are making connections with one another. As a group we begin to listen while the others are speaking to us through their movement, rather than going about our own agendas. I do partnering work in a smaller group that later becomes the portrait of onlookers, carefully overseeing the lives of those whom we have left behind. In the final tableau of the piece I, along with Paul Vickers, make a physical connection with Heather Ursulum and welcome her into our family portrait, bringing the piece to a close.

URSULA PAYNE

As an African-American woman who regularly performs her solo choreography in a variety of arenas from regional to international, Ursula Payne has been described by dance critics as being a *big woman, strong and supple, fiercely feminine, spectacular dancer* who offers powerful performances with virtuosic dancing. Creating dances that embrace the expressive nature of raw physicality merged with conceptual and visceral intelligence rooted in the humanity of a woman of African descent is the driving force that inspires originality within her performance practice. Payne's professional choreography has received four prestigious choreography fellowships from the Pennsylvania Council of the Arts and has been positively reviewed or recognized by some of the most prominent critics and publications in the dance field, including those of the New York Times, the Village Voice and Dance Magazine. As reflected in reviews of her work, she has gained a solid reputation as an outstanding performer and as an intriguing and serious choreographer.

Payne's growing reputation as both a Scholar and Creative Artist in the field of Modern Dance has afforded her the ability to conduct progressive research, serve as an artistic consultant to numerous dance organizations, choreograph student-centered ensemble work, perform her advanced solo choreography and teach her own innovative dance and performance technique (**Payne Technique**), on five continents (Africa, Europe, North America, South America, Asia) and nine countries (Monaco, Ethiopia, Egypt, Taiwan, Brazil, Mexico, Cuba, Scotland, and Belize).

Payne's choreography has resulted in over 150 performances produced in recognized professional public as well as academic theaters and festivals such as 2009 American Dance Guild's Performance Series, New York City's Lincoln Center Out-of-Doors, Tribeca Performing Arts Center, Downtown Dance Festival, Dance Theater Workshop's Fresh Tracks Series, Movement Research at Judson Church, and HERE Culturemart Series, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Inside Out Series Lee, MA; The Dance Place, Washington, D.C.; the Community Education Center, Philadelphia, PA; Theater on Elm Street, Dallas, TX; Conwell Dance Theater, Philadelphia, PA; Susan Hess Modern Dance Center, In Performance Series; Philadelphia, PA; and The Dance Place, Washington D.C. Internationally, Payne has toured to Monaco Danses Dances Forum in Monte Carlo, Monaco; Belize City, Belize; the Fringe Festival of Independent Dance Artists, Toronto, Canada; The Edinboro Festival in Scotland and The National College Dance Festival in Taipei, Taiwan.

Ms. Payne has taught, performed and/or been commissioned to create choreography as a guest artist at the following educational institutions: Loyola Marymount University, Duke University's Nasher Museum, National Taiwan University of the Arts, The University of Memphis, Temple University, Frostburg State University, The Ohio State University, Kent State University, Youngstown State University, Howard University, Trinity College, Ohio University, Middle Tennessee State University, California State University at Sacramento, Texas Women's University, Spelman College, and the University of Oregon. Since 2002, Ursula has been on faculty at the American Dance Festival, the world's premier summer festival for modern dance located on the campus of Duke University in Durham, NC.

Payne has also worked as a dancer with Dianne McIntyre, one of the premier African-American female choreographers of our time. She was invited by Ms. McIntyre to perform as a featured dancer in **Love Poems to God** in national venues such as the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), and the National Black Arts Festival in Atlanta, GA. Ms. Payne also appeared by invitation of Ms. McIntyre as a dancer in the motion picture adaptation of Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize winning novel **The Beloved** that featured Oprah Winfrey and Danny Glover in the lead roles. McIntyre's choreography deals poignantly with the black experience and she has been critically acclaimed and praised for her innovative presentation of black culture.

Payne is currently a Professor of Dance at Slippery Rock University, where she has completed her thirteenth year.



CHAPTER 3: The Choreographer's Aesthetic

Payne's movement vocabulary is heavily weighted and aggressive. She keeps the pelvis low and charges through space, while using very straight and angular positions of the arms and legs. The limbs slice through space, while the weight of the head leads the torso off center in turns and jumps. She is very interested in seeing fragments of bodies being manipulated through the use of partner work or spatial organization. Her movement is sharp and often there is not much time to completely luxuriate in a position because of the quickness or accuracy at which the dancer needs to be in the next position. Yet somehow in her work, she creates space for the dancers to truly exemplify who they are within the community she has established. Payne's floor vocabulary requires speed, power and agility.

In much of her work she creates order and then deviates from it. She will powerfully establish a solid structure, such as a line, group or circle formation and then have a soloist emerge in the midst of the ensemble, doing movement that heavily contrasts that of the group. Ursula is truly talented at guiding the eye where she wants it to go. By creating a pattern of movement and then completely abandoning it, she draws the viewer's eye directly to the place where the order is broken.

Payne's choreography often consists of many layers, with several things happening at once. Many times when you see a work, there are places in which a large group section is taking place in the background while your eye is drawn to the duet with intricate partnering. In Payne's work she can instantly snap your eye to a place where there was stillness, although there was movement happening on the opposite side of the stage. She pulls your interest to where the new movement is happening, and plays with having it sprout from all areas of the stage. Your eye is constantly shifting, not focusing on one specific dancer or group of dancers, but just trying to keep up with all that is happening in front of you.

She creates webs of movement in which the dancers are entangled, having to climb over and manipulate one another to free themselves. There is a lot of cause and effect seen in her dances. There will be stillness and then one dancer will touch or influence another dancer, by placing weight on them, using their hands to swing the other's arm, or finding a point of contact and manipulating the facing of the other's torso. This leads to movement of the dancer who has been manipulated, to break out or to perform a similar action on another dancer. These domino effects results in the manipulation of all dancers who then either break away from the group or are drawn back into it, leading up to a large statement of individuality or community.

Because of the specificity of her movement style, Payne values working with trained dancers who have full command and control over their bodies. She thinks that it is truly captivating when a dancer can exhibit mastery over their instrument, which I believe is a very big factor in work which requires you to have control in a place of commotion. As a choreographer Payne loves to shape negative space on a stage. In her work "Standing in the Middle of Chaos... This Could Be Your Finest Hour", she opened up a large circle in the center of the stage which then became the point that movement radiated from. Later in the piece it feels as though she has literally picked up the stage rotated in one hundred and eighty degrees and set it back down, as the dancers move as one unit crossing the stage and turning around themselves as a group.

CHAPTER 4: The Intention of the Dance

As the lights fade up, revealing a cluster of ten dancers in stillness, staring purposefully forward a smooth voice says “And we invite you wherever you are, whether you’re at home or whatever. . . to kick your shoes off, and put your feet up, and lean back and get yourself a cup of coffee or something and just relax and join us in enjoying a very quiet mood, romantic and relaxed music for a couple of hours.” The cluster takes a deep breath and establishes a strong unison in pulse, breath and dynamic. Immediately following the group repeats the same movement phrase using their own timing, accents, and choosing to repeat certain gestures at their own will. It is clear that these people are similar in their status, but different in their agenda. As all members of this community finish their phrases in stillness, a few dancers begin to perform gestures that establish them as temporary leaders of the pack. These chosen few lead the group as we charge forward creating another moment of strong unison, with quick angular movement that has an element of suspension and lift, with the slightest hint of urgency. The group slowly begins to break apart, into two groups that maintain separate unison phrases. Each time coming back to the powerful community that was established at the opening of the piece.

Lauren then separates from the group completely, taking her own route as she contrasts the slow sustained movement. There is a strong sense of confidence in this movement, and the spatial distance between her and the large group ensures that her statement of individuality is heard. As she charges back into the group, she makes contact with two other dancers, Jhia and Jesse, sparking the domino effect that begins to establish the mood the upcoming section of the piece. The partnering consists of pushing and pulling points of contact in order to manipulate the other dancer into a change in placement of weight or in facing. There are moments of cause and effect happening between all of the dancers until there comes another moment of stillness as the faint arbitrary background noise consisting of babies crying, dial tones, male and female voices drastically changes to the strum of an electric guitar. Just then Jesse runs, as if trying to escape and is lifted high above our community as we all watch him with seemingly no expression on our faces. There is no sense of awe, confusion, or worry but the community is simply observant – as if this sort of thing happens all the time. Once again returning to the familiarity of the cluster, the momentum of the music begins to build. There is one final “outburst” from Paul, using sharp, slashing moments, quick rises and falls, and fast turns as the community quietly awaits his return. Paul then blindly returns to his place in the cluster as if drawn by a magnet to stand in the place created for him.

Immediately the group begins another set of unison gestures, very slowly. These four gestures are repeated in unison five times, each time building in aggression, speed, and demand. After the height of the momentum is reached, the group quickly disseminates. Each person leaves the stage using a very direct pathway, with no interaction between dancers. Everyone is focused on getting to their destination with no intention of letting something get in their way.

All but two dancers have left the stage, leaving a void only to be filled by the strength and energy of those two remaining dancers. These two dancers, Lauren and Miesha, repeat the phrase of movement that Lauren danced during her first separation from the group. Coupled with the intensity of this music, it has an even greater sense of urgency and attack. They continue this movement in unison as another dancer, Paul, enters the space completing the end of the phrase with them. Miesha and Lauren exit, as Paul begins performing a variation of the movement from his “outburst”. During Paul’s statement, Heather and Suzy

confidently enter because they have something to declare as well. Their movement speaks very loudly as it introduces a new phrase of movement in which Paul syncs with during one point of his solo work. Paul's work has a sense of lightness, fluidity and continuity whereas the Heather and Suzy's phrase exhibits athleticism, strength, as they truly give their weight into the floor.

Paul's exit corresponds with the entrance of a trio, who come on the stage with the self-confidence of runway models. There is something about that entrance that seems to say, "I'm young, I'm daring and bold, and I have something very important to announce." These three begin performing a high energy, staccato phrase, with inversions and taking up lots of space. They do this phrase in a canon, which then leads into a breaking away from the "coolness" of that phrase into their individual voices utilizing portions of each movement phrase that was previously performed to establish their own sense of individuality, which is still cohesive with the greater voice of the community of dancers.

During this time three dancers re-enter the space, only to collapse on the floor, as Jessie and Felicia re-enter in the same lift we exited the stage with as Felicia slowly pedals down to plant her feet on the ground. The partnering work performed has a similar quality of both the "domino phrasing" that happens within the opening minutes of the piece, as well as the attack and sharpness of the individual statements made by all the dancers who have claimed the space before them. Meanwhile, Lauren and Jhia continue to dance amongst the fallen bodies at times using them egotistically for support of their floor work and inversions. Once this duet has completed their phrase of movement, the last two dancers enter the stage and for the first time since height of the momentum at the opening of the dance are all the dancers on stage together for a common cause.

There is a slight shift in the music, as the softer tones start to fade and richer more authoritative tones become prevalent in the music. We begin a large unison phrase that travels into and away from the center of the circle. This movement is tough as it creates a lot of negative space within the group, as well as within the kinesphere of the individual dancers' bodies. In this moment we have all come together in a collective energy that represents the common ground we share in that we are living life at warp speed, steadily building momentum and never knowing when to take time to be still. The movement in this entire section continues to strike and retreat, casting energy out and bringing it back in abruptly. The power of the group is amazing in this moment because we are all charging forward, with ferocity and strength giving as much as we take. As the energy steadily rises, we break out into individual phrases, performing them boisterously while the music crescendos. One by one each dancer is snapped out of the most extreme place of high-energy quality, only to be lead back to the community watching those who are still exhibiting their moment of rebellion. As the music begins to reach its ultimate climax there is one soloist still going and a duet that has formed behind her. With the speed of the music seemingly increasing, the height of sound growing, she continues to go at warp speed and suddenly collapses in conjunction with the abrupt ending of the music.

Immediately, the entire mood of the piece shifts to that of which established relationships become important, where stillness and observation are valued and necessary. The next few moments of the piece contain delicate partner work where the dependence upon one another is truly exemplified. Contrary to the manipulative partner work that happened in the first section of the piece, this work is gentle and trusting. While six dancers begin exploring and indulging in this sudden realization of the necessity of _____, the other four observe and as if in agreement with what is taking place they perform the phrase that opened the piece – yet with the percussive element of the gestures heavily

diminished. Paul's statement that was once a selfish outburst becomes a defining moment of vulnerability and sincerity.

As others begin to have their moments of self-declaration, the community becomes observant and moves in harmony. The stage shifts as the group travels in a peaceful unity, while one dancer begins to express herself with fluidity, and softness. The energy of the group is pulsing in and away from her as she "speaks", they are collectively taking in her words. This section of the piece exhibits the recognition of the need for compassion and strong relationships after life calls you to slow down and really take a look at what happens around you.

During this time two groups of people are beginning to be established, and it is gradually revealed that the groups have a separate statuses. One group continues to gently partner each other, truly establishing connections with one another, taking their time to create support and trust with one another. These dancers begin to retreat into the background, keeping a watchful eye over the others they have left behind. As these dancers begin to move into their final tableau, there are moments when dancers will lash out and try to escape the destiny they have been faced with. Yet, the others are there to comfort them as they begin to accept their current circumstance. The second group of dancers maintains the percussive and striking nature of movement similar to the opening phrases of the dance, while evoking the soothing mood of the final piece of music. They continue to move through their lives, while unknowingly being guided and protected by the ones that have left them.

In the final moments of the piece, the dancers in the second group are paused one by one, as a single dancer begins to recognize that it is also her time to advance into the next part of her journey. She makes her way to each of the dancers in her group, as asserting her final self-declaration and peacefully goes to take her place within the group of watchful onlookers that have already crossed over into their next lives.

CHAPTER 5: Journals

Day One

Today was very rewarding. I can't believe how much work we got done. We started off learning 2 phrases in the first two hours of rehearsal. They were both very athletic and demanding. I really like her movement style – a lot of it is very expansive and far reach kinesphere, which I really enjoy.

Ursula is very great to work with. She gives us a phrase and then a few minutes to fill in the blanks for ourselves, & figure out how we need to organize our bodies in order to properly execute the specific phrase. The athleticism of her movement is something I truly enjoy. It also includes the lines & cleanliness that really appeal to me from Horton technique.

When she started to play with the structuring of the movement I was really intrigued with how her mind began cutting & inserting the material from two short phrases creating a much longer work with transitions, entrances & exits. I will definitely include that in an interview question. I'm very curious about her process.

Overall, I feel like today was a great day. We set the intro & beginning sections of the dance. Jesse and I are the only two who haven't re-entered the stage after the large group disperses after the intro [opening]. Hopefully we'll be the first to be worked with on Sunday. I think I did well with picking up the phrasework, I just need to work on making it flow coherently and smoothly from one segment to the next. My body feels good. My back was tired from so much standing. I didn't feel too much out of my comfort zone w/the movement so ... yay!

I'm gaining excitement for this project as time progresses. I'm still trying to find the balance btwn. performance, technique *and* precision/accuracy. I feel like when I focus on one, the others diminish.

I think I packed too much food ... didn't eat it all. I had a good breakfast though. It's so funny that last fall I was so nervous & uncomfortable in Rogelio's rehearsals b/c it was my first time partnering. This year I just jump right in and I am so extremely comfortable. Chad said today that we have an awesome cast. I think the dynamic of this group of dancers is pretty fantastic. We did a great job of staying focused, but also encouraging and supporting one another. Awesome Day. Ready 4 more. I'll start filming tomorrow.

Day Two 9.27.09 (Journal written AFTER watching rehearsal video)

Today's rehearsal began with learning a new phrase, which became a group section. It involves a lot of weight shifts & quick changes in direction. It requires control, & swiftness along with sustainment & fluidity. This concept is hard for me to execute w/o getting wild & flailing myself all over the place. So I really need to focus on being specific yet not looking choppy/robotlike. Towards the end of this group section Jesse, Heather, Pal and I break off into the first phrase, which made me very happy because I hadn't been able to perform it within the piece yet. After watching myself in this rehearsal video I've realized that I need to focus on fully stretching my limbs & also placing emphasis & energy on the hands & feet.

Jesse & I have a partnering section, which enters in during a trio of Jhia, Erin & Edward. We really need to work on the clarity in the transitions. I know we can do it. Just takes practice.

For a while today we were allowed to take movements from each of the 3 phrases and create a personal solo. We could make our own transitions between them & manipulate them however we wanted. After the big group section we go into a canon all performing our

solos and I become the focal point as the last one to finish. Ursula instructed me to “JUST GO!” and have immense energy during that part as the music climaxes and comes to an abrupt end. [As my solo did also.]

After seeing the solo on tape I noticed I was good on the energy but because my body wasn't clear on the movement it lacked commanding power.

I will continue to work on precision and clarity w/power as these next few rehearsals come along. Today I had a difficult time picking up the phrases Ursula taught. I will need better focus. I think it's really time for me to take the things I know about myself (i.e. my learning style) and use them to my advantage.

I feel like there is still somewhat of a mental roadblock I need to get over that is preventing me from doing my best work.

Day Three (3) 09.28

This was the most successful of all rehearsals we have had thus far. It's the first time I felt like I was actually “performing” the work. We are starting to delve a bit into the second song which has a completely different quality/mood/tone than the first. I think it will be very enjoyable for the audience as well as for us as dancers/performers.

I think a lot of the success of this rehearsal can be attributed to my entrance into the situation with a specific goal in mind, which was to fully extend through my limbs [as I had been working with Paige in my one-on-one coaching sessions] & send energy out through the feet and palms. Increasing awareness of my feet & hands allowed for me to make clear decisions about where my body was placed and have a heightened sense of body organization. Overall, this made for a clean performance & I believe I will continue to set goals for myself for each following rehearsal.

Jesse and I are still working on our partnering section. Something about it just feels awkward and I don't know what it is. I still am uncomfortable with the movement.

As far as the rest of the dance goes, I am beginning to feel the movement flow more naturally but I know that I need to continue to work on transitioning steps. There are a few places where I get “stuck” in between movements & get lost. By the time I catch up to the movement I am late – so I just need to rehearse making these moments clear for myself.

During the final full run through I did well on my solo & I didn't feel rushed or messy. When I was rehearsing during our downtime I got a compliment from Jhia and Ursula agreed that what I had done looked nice so that made me happy.

Ursula cleaned the unison after the group circle section which helped me to slowly get the movement @ the right time & in to my body.

I have to stop thinking & over analyzing & just dance. That balance happens when I take everything away (i.e. expectation, anxiety, worry & fear). I have to trust myself and know that my talent and energy is not something I have to work hard for. The cleanliness, clarity, focus, etc. are the difficult aspects for my performance. Also, not fully knowing the steps and feeling confident in them prevents me from performing them with pure engagement.

Learning

1. Watch first!
2. Always do movement full out.
3. Ask questions for clarity.

Bring questions & comments to U.P. during/b4 rehearsal

Rehearsal

1. Breathe
2. Trust my body.
3. Clear transitions.

For Tuesday:

- clear transitions
- Become comfortable w/movement

Day Four the dance is done!

I can't believe we finished the dance today! Today I went into rehearsal extremely exhausted: I had only slept three hours, had ballet, modern, and jazz classes and also finale rehearsal during convo. Somehow I mustered up the energy to get through Ursula's 3-hour long rehearsal and it was so very rewarding. The collective energy is what kept us all going. We were all tired, sore, achy, bruised, but there was something beautiful and very profound that took place tonight.

Last night I set goals for this rehearsal and I feel like I was very focused today in working towards them. I had to shift my mindset a few times to stop thinking about movement and just letting it flow. Ursula gave a correction to us to focus on clarity, clean lines, and placement of hands/arms. By doing this, the group really had a sense of control although the movement was very fast-paced and moved within the large kinesphere of space.

Today I reached another level of performance. Each day I unlock a new aspect of it and am letting go of anxieties, fears, and insecurities.

I was watching Heather today in rehearsal and trying to pinpoint the qualities of her movement that make her an amazing performer. What I took note of was that her focus always told you what to follow or look away from. Clarity and precision make the movement aesthetically pleasing. She has the ability and body intelligence to command her body and tell it what to do, rather than letting her body take her for a ride.

Performance is challenging for me because I am in the process of learning not to work as hard as I believe I should. When I over exert I lost control and detail & just begin to look sloppy.

Today I was very in the moment & attentive to what was happening & felt extremely proud of what transpired. At the end U.P. was so impressed w/our dancing that she teared up a little. The performer in all of us truly came out. What also made a difference for me was dancing through the moments of uncertainty and knowing/trusting that I would do the best work possible.

Wed, Fri & Sat are for cleaning. Thurs. is cancelled. ☺☺

Day 5 -- el 30 de septiembre --

I'm feeling a great sense of accomplishment. There are some points in the choreo where I feel like I am still thinking about the steps. For the most part the movement is beginning to flow naturally from my body. During the last run we were a bit early in the music and my solo was extended longer than I had movement for. I had to improvise for about 10 seconds but I think it all worked out very smoothly.

Today we continued to clean and worked on perfecting the transitions between sections and group/partnering work. The only part that is extremely difficult for me is at the end when I have just put Suzy down, I interact with Lauren briefly before I go to the ending tableau.

We did a showing for TK & Scott's cast as our last run through. When watching the video it's evident in my movement quality which areas of the choreo I am still uncertain about. For me it is about making coherent transitions between "steps" so they create a fluid "phrase".

Now we are really concentrating on performing. Our connections to each other are becoming more important. My focus is shifting, I'm beginning to take more space and really extend through my distal ends. Ursula also gave us her take/thoughts on what [the] piece represents for her, and it's something that is relatable to all of us especially as college students.

Day Six 10.02

Today's rehearsal was spent developing/enhancing our performance intelligence ... We ran the piece twice, the first time was not so good ... the second was a little better. She made a few changes w/Jesse and I for our transition into the final section of the piece. We do the lift that happens during our duet during the first song. We asked several questions about intent and focus in order to work towards cleaning the dance. Then she told us that as performers there are certain choices we must make for ourselves – and allow for the freedom of what you feel in the moment to take over. Some nights our focus may shift depending on where you are in that present moment.

My body was very tired (I had only 2 hours of sleep and a full schedule). I think Ursula could sense that we were not our best selves.

Then we broke into groups of 3 or 4 and worked on a worksheet on different types of focus. We had to discuss and come up with definitions for several different type of focus: internal, external, body, traveling, relational, universal, direct, and indirect. You never really think of all these different ways of using your focus. Ursula said it was important for dancers who have a lot of facility (technical ability) to really hone their capacity to focus because that is what truly draws you in to a performer. Technique is good to have but some very beautiful and strong performers do not have the greatest technical ability. I think it was a great exercise for us to do – we shared & discussed our answers for about 20-30 minutes. We also talked about our future plans. I realized that I didn't fully say all that I wanted to do ... maybe I feel like this week has totally been about building my confidence as a dancers and as a student who is graduating and entering the world in a few months. Tomorrow is the final rehearsal ... the focus is FOCUS.

DAY SEVEN 10.03.09

Today, I actually felt like I was dancing. The movement is becoming more ingrained in my body. We only ran the piece twice, I was hoping we ran it more than that. ☺ There was breath and I got to the point where I was no longer thinking about the "steps". There was performance and it was alive. I really enjoyed it. We gave Ursula a cheap little thank you poster at the end of the rehearsal. I think she really appreciated it. We also played with different costume choices.

The final time we ran the piece we ran it without socks for the first time ever. It was sticky and uncertain. We suggested that we stick w/socks. I think that it may just have been the fact that we had become so accustomed to dancing in socks that redistributing the weight was weird.

She added something to the end of my transition w/Jesse into the final section. Good feedback.

Oct. 20, 2009

Most recently I've been battling with insecurities that I think have stemmed from several events that have occurred in the last few months.

1) Going from not believing I had the potential to be a professional to realizing it as a possibility has led me to start questioning my own ability as a dancer/performer.

2) A not-so-positive comment from a teacher I really looked up to. Now it is hard for me to focus in their class and truly learn/take full advantage of the learning opportunity.

3) Feeling that I do not have a competitive edge/great auditioning skills.

4) Problems accepting the fact that I am good b/c I always see what I need to work on/improve, not what I do well.

Long story short, I lack confidence. Everyone keeps complementing me on how much I have grown and improved – I do acknowledge these changes – but I still feel as though it is not enough.

CHAPTER 6: My Strengths and Challenges

Going into this work I was completely unaware of the level of technical difficulty that this work would present to me. Ursula's movement was different from anything I had previous experience with. It required me to work in contrasting qualities of movement, and to transition smoothly between them. The movement ranged from light and sustained, to bound, sudden, sharp movement, followed by strong weighted free flow. Many choreographers that I have worked with in the past tend to have a signature movement quality so if I miss a detail during the learning process I can easily fill in the blanks for myself. Because of my unfamiliarity with Ursula and her movement style I had to be very attentive to placement of weight, pathways of the arms and legs, focus, and accuracy of speed.

Ursula began the first day by teaching us two phrases of movement. They were both very technically difficult for me and I struggled to keep up. She also moved very quickly because of the limited amount of time we had together, but also to gauge our technical abilities and see what we could handle.

All of the floor work I was able to execute with ease. The speed and the manner at which she distributed her weight into the floor, her placement and energy was very remnant of the work I had done the previous two semesters with Chad. I was very comfortable with this movement and could perform it assertively with little difficulty. As a technician I brought strength and poise to the work, a quality that was very evident in the voice of the choreography.

One of the final rehearsal nights Ursula split us into groups and we did a written exercise regarding eight different types of focus: internal, external, body, traveling, relational, universal, direct, and indirect. Each group came up with a definition for every one of the terms. As we shared our ideas, Ursula chimed in with her opinions on the detail of focus. She challenged us to note which level of focus we were engaged in at different moments within the piece, and discuss if there were any parts of the dance in which we should have similar or dissimilar focuses.

Personally, I believe that focus is an element that draws the audience in to a performer. Focus establishes the mood and tone of the piece; it communicates the intention of the dance to the viewers; it gives the dancer a sense of direction that is not physical but motivational. I made a choice to engage in a specific focus throughout the entirety of the piece, whether it is stimulated from the focus of the group or an internally inspired focus. This exercise gave me the confidence to make my own choices within the piece, and I truly felt my presence coming alive in the movement.

"Immediately establish your presence" is what Ursula said to me at the end of the week. One strength that I have as a performer is a very commanding presence. It was very difficult for me to truly exemplify my performance abilities at the beginning of the rehearsal process, because of my unfamiliarity with Ursula's working style and also her movement vocabulary. Working with a choreographer who has never seen me dance before, I have to show them everything I am capable of while learning their movement and also trying to gauge their personality. I know that during the weeklong process the quality of my performance rose from zero to ten (later becoming fifty over the following six weeks), and Ursula taught me that I should aspire to establish myself at ten upon entering a room.

During this process I set several goals for myself. Ursula's movement vocabulary was very strong weighted and direct, which is opposite my natural movement vocabulary, as it tends to be very sustained and lifted. When becoming comfortable with choreography, I begin to slip into my normal movement patterns and lose the detail of the choreographer's intention. I set a goal to maintain the intricacies of Ursula's style, including the ferocity of slashing the limbs through space, the airy sustained phrases with leg extension, and power and aggression of the floor work while still letting my personal voice shine through the movement.

Another goal that I set for myself was building consistency and trust within myself. Many times when I am learning a new work I find myself doing it different every single time I do it. This is because I always feel that I am doing it wrong, or poorly. I am in a constant state of improving and learning, and never in a place where I am comfortable and doing repetitious work to get it into my body. As a soloist, I can get away with modifying elements of the dance each time I do it. In unison or partnering sections I need exhibit the same execution each time because others are dependent upon what I do.

During my interview with Ursula, she said that I was “always a step behind” during any unison work. The truth is I did not trust myself to know what to do in regards to the timing, spacing, directional focus, and sometimes I did not even have enough confidence in knowing the choreography. I looked around at those who were dancing around me or in my line of sight, because I was uncertain if what I was doing was correct. I would then be out of step with the group timing because I looking at them for timing and I was looking at them for detail of movement because I was not confident in my own body.

The issues that I had with confidence during this rehearsal process – especially during the days that Ursula was present – led to issues with my place within the piece. Some people became frustrated with me because my spatial pattern in certain group travelling steps would change each time we ran through the piece. Also, because of my lack of consistency I had trouble making fluid transitions between the phrases we learned separately, and also between segments of movement that had multiple weight and directional qualities. Towards the end of the week, I made a goal for the next rehearsal to be a time to clarify all of the transitions in between larger movement ideas to create a performance that was seamless and cohesive.

In essence, I had trouble making decisions and sticking to them. I kept seeking something more, something better than what I could produce at the moment leading me unsatisfied no matter what I did. This led to my inconsistency with movement, incorrect timing, differing pathways, lack of confidence in execution of the steps and unclear transitions.

Stepping into this process was extremely challenging for me. Being a senior in this dance program I sensed that I was under extreme scrutiny from faculty and peers, and I was worried that I would not live up to their expectations – which were actually unattainable standards that I placed upon myself. I knew that this was going to be the final faculty concert I performed in, and I faced several anxieties about the last impression I would make upon the dance community.

An ongoing problem within my dance training has been the fear of not living up to the technique and performance ability of my peers. When learning the work, I began to focus on how I would be viewed as performer in this work, and how well my technique would be represented. When I begin learning choreography, I am great at keeping it in my body and performing it well. At times I get distracted and lose focus, leading to my performance of the work with less accuracy. This results in a loss of confidence and drive. My fear was that Ursula would immediately identify this quality within me and ultimately give me smaller role in the work that would not truly capture my abilities. Although for a moment my anxieties got the best of me, I was able to work through them and exemplify the strength that I carry within myself.

I know that if I were to do it all over again I would have a completely different experience. Yet, if the experience had changed in any way I would not have emerged from the protective shell that prevented me from taking risks or standing out (in a positive way) because of my lack of confidence. Many of my accomplishments I could not see during the rehearsal and performance process of this work, but can readily identify as I reflect and analyze my progress during this time.

During the weeks leading up to the onstage performance I began to truly define the movement for myself and in my own body. I truly felt my personality speaking through the

movement. We began rehearsing with Chad and clarifying all aspect of "Standing in the Middle of Chaos... This Could Be Your Finest Hour."

Final Journal on Rehearsal and Performance

At the beginning of this experience I had no idea what to expect. The only thing we knew about Ursula was what we had learned from her biography. I did not know if she would be anything like any of the professors at LMU, or if she would have a completely different working style. There was an overall sense of curiosity within the group because we had no idea of her personality (if she was strict or had a sense of humor) or of her movement style. When she first walked in, I was surprised at her stature. She was confident, strong, and seemed as though she had a very warm heart. She came in, Chad gave her brief introduction and then we got to work. Because I had been in contact with Ursula about my senior thesis project, I went up to her and introduced myself.

Ursula began by teaching us two phrases. I was nervous as we began learning the phrases, probably because I was approaching this experience in the wrong manner. I was trying to make and shape the experience, rather than let it happen. The first phrase we learned was fairly simple, it had lots of tiny details to pick up on but I had no problem executing it with ease. As I got comfortable with the phrase my mind began to wander and I got a little confused – losing the specificity of the phrase. The second phrase was technically harder for me and I got lost in the movement by trying to make up for what I lacked in the knowledge of the steps by over performing. From these two phrases she broke us up into pairs and trios, and she started cutting and pasting the phrases together creating entrances and exits for those she had chosen.

Through this experience I really started uncovering how I learn movement and how I can improve upon it. I became aware that I tend to look at the entire picture and attempt to execute movement perfectly the first time I do it. By trying to digest everything at once I never truly see the details of the full picture, therefore I miss the clarity and assertiveness of the movement phrase. During the rehearsal process, I learned that I needed to have separate rehearsal time with myself to go over each step slowly, and make connections that I sometimes missed during the initial learning

process. Ursula suggested that I try to pick up on what it is I see first (i.e. the placement of the pelvis, weight shifts, direction change, etc.) and from there begin to layer on the details because there is no way you can pick up everything the first time you are learning a movement phrase.

An area I felt very overwhelmed in was the large group section that began with the two circles and led all the way into our personal phrases and finally the abrupt ending that signaled the end of the first music. With the large circle, I had to make sure that I was in sync with 4 other dancers, as well as paying attention to the five dancers that were doing a separate unison section at the same time. The most challenging aspect of this section was the fact that we were all dancing toward and away from the midpoint of the circle, giving us all different facings and angles of movement. For this section I began to build self-reliance and started trusting my own abilities.

My conversation with Ursula after the weeklong process definitely opened my eyes to the strengths she saw within me, and shed light on challenges I was previously unaware of. One thing I really enjoyed about this conversation was that she gave these criticisms and told me why she thought they happened and then offered a solution that she thought would help.

A challenge I was having throughout the week was during unison work I tended to be a little behind the group timing. I know that I usually have this problem because of my lack of confidence in my own knowledge of the movement as well as distrust in myself to know the correct timing, so I am constantly watching the others that I am performing with for information about where I should be. Ursula saw it differently. She saw it has a technical issue, not as a mental one. She said that the type of body that I have lends itself to movement that is able to sustain and be light for a very long time. Her body and movement preference are more aggressive than my body's natural movement quality, therefore I need to work on being more weighted in order to move quickly through the phrases and keep up with the timing of the rest of the group.

Once we started rehearsing with Chad, I felt that I could really start investigating the performance aspect of the work. During the time spent with Ursula I was extremely focused on learning the material and properly executing it, but I had not spent much time on the intention of the piece and honing my performance of the work. I was happy that I got the chance to do this because it allowed for me to really start finding my own voice within the movement. I stopped playing it safe as I did when Ursula was there, but I began taking risks in different ways – being more expansive in my movement, playing with focus, and really pushing myself to stop thinking about the movement and just do it. Chad helped us to comb through the piece and fine tune it, being attentive to each detail such as placement of the hands, focus, timing, intent, spatial patterns, and overall quality of movement.

The first night in the theater I felt that I was still under-rehearsed for the piece. I had not truly made the complete switch from rehearsing in my brain to comfortably performing in my body. Compared to other pieces I was in, we had not had as many consistent rehearsals for Ursula's piece, so going into the theater I had major nerves about how we would perform together as a group, and how I would perform as a member of the ensemble.

After the first couple of runs in the theater (tech and dress rehearsals) I started to get into performance mode. The cast had great energy and the piece was received well by our peers and other faculty members. Our cast really bonded in a different way than other casts I have been involved in.

A few questions that I have are what Ursula's opinion would have been of my development throughout the weeks spent on her piece. Having more insight as to what strengths and challenges remain, after the rehearsal and performance process would give me great information about my process. I would also like to know the significance of my improvement in the areas she believed I needed to work on.

CHAPTER 7: Interviews with Performers

Interview Questions

1. Why do you perform?
2. At what point in the rehearsal process do you stop thinking about choreography and begin honing your performance quality?
3. What elements of performance do you feel most confident in? (Character, mood, energy, persona?) Why?
4. How do you prepare for performance? What is your mindset backstage? Does it depend on genre/style/mood/choreography?
5. Do you believe technical ability and high performance quality are connected? Why or why not? In what ways?
6. Choose ONE element of performance that draws you in to a dancer, what is it and why?

Student Performer Responses

Dai Janai Lopez, *Junior Dance Major*

- I perform because it's a sense of therapy for me. When I get on the stage I don't have to worry about any of my problems, I can just let them all out on stage. It's the one time when I'm actually focused on one specific thing and I'm not worried about all the other aspects of life.
- It's not until I find my own connection with the music and what's happening in the choreographer's mind that I can actually add my own feeling and my own performance quality to it. So it varies depending on the piece and the choreographer.
- I think character, because that's where I begin my performance. I start thinking about the character and from there it evolves and unfolds into whatever I end up doing. I think about the music, why the character has been matched to the music, I take the words from the music and my idea of what the character is and put it together in order to create ... the attitude of that character.
- I meditate on the song, think about what it is that I'm trying to relay. Think about what it is that the choreographer wants to relay and try to bring that not only into my mind, but into my soul so that I can breathe life into the dance so that when I'm on stage I am that person, I'm not trying to be that person. I'm on stage, alive, in front of everybody being what was asked.
- I don't get performance anxiety often, but when I do get it, it scares me because I don't get it often. Sometimes I just kind of breathe through it ... and sometimes I play it off ... as I begin performing, I just let it go.
- Most of the time if it's a big piece and everybody is doing the same exact choreography the thing that draws me in is how deeply dropped into character the person is. How much the person embodies not just the movement but the attitude of the movement and the attitude of the character ... If you're really into the work fully, not just in a selfish way but really embracing the art which the choreographer gave you or the art that has been presented, that's what draws my eye to a certain person.

Brantley Jittu, *Sophomore Dance Major*

- "I think the reason that I perform is because the feeling ... when I'm dancing on stage or at a performance ... I feel like I'm giving back the feeling of what dance brings to me ... the joy that I feel, I feel that I can just let that out when I'm performing. I give it to the audience, I give it to the mirror, I give it to who ever I'm performing for, even myself ... that feeling like when you love dance and you get all of that emotion, you just give it back to the audience."
- *When do you stop thinking about choreography and start thinking about performance quality?* "I think it's not a moment you plan for, it's something you just realize."
- "I think that main quality that I have confidence in [as a performer] would be energy, with my background as a cheerleader that's like the main thing you focus on when you're performing, because you're trying to bring up the crowd. I think that crosses over into my dancing. Whenever I'm dancing, it's very energetic, very uplifting, and powerful mostly focused on the energy. I think character would come into that a little bit, I mean you're putting on a show."
- "My performance anxiety normally comes after I'm done performing. That's when everything settles in 'Oh, I did this wrong, I did that wrong', 'Oh, everybody judged me on

this', 'Oh, everybody hated that', 'Oh, did anybody like anything?' ... While I'm on stage I'm in the moment I'm focused and I'm living."

- *On the relationship between technique and performance ability:* "I think it depends on the movement quality. I think with a jazz dance with lots of legs and turns, and something that is made to be performed at a high energetic level that's where the high performance quality would come in to match that, to match the 'wow', the flash. The flashiness is where I think that comes in. If it were to be a dance that was more serious or more organic that was very about the movement I don't think that there's a technical aspect that everyone would think of when you're thinking of that style of dance. I think that's more about the mood and like the feeling so the performance quality may not be at as high a level but it's definitely a deep connection to the movement ... so I guess it would be connected overall. [In a flashy jazz dance] the technique IS the performance ability."
- "Growing up I would say I that is was their technique [that attracted me to a watch a certain performer], their flexibility, what they were doing in the routine, because my background is all about the picture of what's going on. But now as I've learned a little bit more about dance and have gotten to take class and figure out what it really takes to be a dancer and the work that goes into it... I think when you see a dancer ... not struggling with their movement, but actually doing the work rather than hitting the picture that's something that I struggle with and so when I notice that another dancer has achieved that I think that that's the best moment... because I know how hard it is to get to that point. And to see a dancer on stage go 'boom! Yes I worked for that.' I just love it! I love it, and that's what I live for... It's a hard job and it's hard work and I appreciate the people that put it in the work, it's inspiring."

Charles Roy, *Sophomore Dance Major*

- "I personally perform because I love to entertain. I love to make other people happy. Performing is the one thing that you can do for yourself and at the same time you can benefit someone else who's in the audience. I perform to spread the enjoyment that I have performing to the people who are watching the performance... Definitely audience excitement, that has to be the number one thing in any performance. How I'm making my audience feel. There's no better moment on stage when you've just nailed something and you hear everyone in the audience [gasp]. There is no better feeling than that because you just feel like 'Job well done', 'Mission accomplished', you just did it. It's those feelings ... that keeps me dancing."
- "Well usually when I'm choreographing, the entire choreographic process ... in terms of what material I'm going to keep and what material I'm not going to keep I always perform it before it's concrete. How I feel when I'm performing is just as important as what it looks like to me. If I'm choreographing it, it's right away. It's right when the choreography starts coming out. 'How do I feel when I perform this? Can I perform this confidently? Am I going to be able to perform this with as much performance quality as I want?' [If I'm not choreographing] I usually wait to the end, until all the choreography's done and I can just move within the piece and figure out 'Okay, this is going to work, this is not going to work.'"
- *How do you prepare for a performance?* "It definitely depends on the genre and the style. When it's a more technical piece I'm going to be [harsher] on myself... I'm always checking myself to make sure that I'm up to par. If it's a hip hop piece or an emotional piece it's a lot more

about my physical being and my mental being... what I'm willing to give in my performance. I have to really prepare myself for the performance if it's a more emotional contemporary piece or something where I'm portraying something important. If it's a flashy piece, I really don't have to think about it too much. It's all about being happy before the piece."

- *On the relationship between technique and performance ability:* "No, I don't feel like they are connected at all. Because there are people who can beautifully perform, and there are people who can beautifully demonstrate... In my eyes [they are] completely apart from each other in every sense. Because performance quality comes from, usually, how you feel. And technique doesn't. It comes from a lot of where it needs to be and where it should be, not really how it feels when it's there. Even though they're both crucially important, they have a very underlying connection, if any at all."
- "It's the element of living, being able to look on stage at a dancer or a performer and know that they are having so much enjoyment in the movement and just living. Living through what they're doing, they're not just dancing through what they're doing. It's that element of this is me and this is me performing and that's it. It's just like you don't see that genuine performance element anymore. It's the genuine characteristic in dancers that excites me."

Tiffany Too, *Senior Dance Major*

- "I perform because it's kind of all I've known since I was younger, I started dancing/performing more when I was 4 ... ever since then I've never stopped performing. I love the adrenaline rush when you're on stage, the whole rehearsal process, you know just trying to perfect every last movement that the choreographer gives you. Also trying to find how you add that extra 'umph' that's just you. I enjoy that whole process and the challenge and everything. I love being backstage, you know putting on makeup, getting ready for the performance. Just going through everything in my head. Once I get on stage, [having] everything that I worried about before just disappearing. Having fun."
- "I think I move from rehearsal to performance quality when I feel like I really know the material. I think that plays a big part in it. Sometimes when you're pressed for time, you don't have that time to know that you know the material, and so it's like psyching myself out even though I might have questions in my mind I just say 'know I know it.' Just making sure I do everything full out. I think when I stop worrying and start having more fun with it, is when I'm able to move from the rehearsal process... to the performance quality."
- "[When preparing to go on stage] I get into my body more, I warm up and I'm going through whatever the next piece is in my head, initially. Then I focus on warming up my spine, making sure that I'm not going to injure myself. So I go from at first worrying about the piece I'm about to perform, so I rehearse mentally and maybe I'll mark it through. Then I'll warm-up, and I think by warming up I'm able to be more present in my own body. That prepares me for getting on stage."
- "My mindset backstage, depends on the piece. Sometimes if it's something that supposed to be more emotional... I'll be more quiet, just trying to gather my thoughts and remember the emotion I'm trying to evoke. Whereas if it's like a high energy large group piece like a hip-hop group getting ready to perform for Madness (at Midnight) I'm a lot more social definitely trying to keep the energy up."
- "If I feel like I don't know the piece I'm about to perform, I'm backstage marking it over and over again. I think now I don't get as nervous as I used to when I was younger. I would

literally just blank out sometimes. Even to this day when I'm auditioning, or if I have to do a solo... I get a lot of anxiety. When I was younger sometimes I would just blank out I would have to just improv whatever I was going to do. I would do a talent show... In 3rd grade I did a tap solo, I choreographed it all by myself and I wrote down everything. Thinking it would help me. I'd go back everyday, and try to practice it and then I remember I got there, got on stage and forgot everything... Sometimes I just have to take a few deep breaths and then I'm ready to go."

- *On the relationship between technique and performance ability:* "I think they're connected to an extent, but at the same time you can be a great performer and not have the best technique. You see that in like *So You Think You Can Dance*, there's amazing performers they might not have the best technique but they're a lot more fun to watch than people who have perfect technique but they're really lacking that performance quality. I think they can be linked to an extent, but you don't have to have the best technique to be the best performer."
- "While watching the different dance concerts [I was] trying to see what makes me watch one person over another. I think a lot of it has to do with confidence ... energy ... even just through watching people in class. When someone is really in sync with music you can see that too, and I think that draws me in to watching someone as well."

Britt Willut, *Senior Dance Major*

- "When I perform, a different side of me comes out ... I want them (the audience) to experience what I embody. I like having a character (when performing), because it gives me a chance to be someone who I'm not. So when I can (embody a different character), that's when it's easiest for me [to perform]."
- "[Before I go on stage] I have to listen to my iPod and isolate myself... I have to limit myself, and so I usually like go do my own warm-up and like do my own meditation just tell myself things and go through the corrections in my head and listen to the actual music that I'm going to be dancing to and kind of just block people out... For Sophie's piece I would go separate and do a whole different warm-up for my feet, I would get ready 20 minutes early so I'm the only one on stage. And I would talk to Sophie before to check if I need to work on anything so I was always super prepared. When I did Damon's piece the year before it was more relaxed, his piece was very calm so it was not like you had to [establish a very strong energy before taking the stage]."
- "I usually end up getting really nervous to the point where I get shaky and I get on stage and I whip through choreography but I don't mean to. I actually started listening [to] classical music and it calms me down... focus on my breathing... downward dog."
- *On the relationship between technique and performance ability:* "I think they are actually. To have the high technicality, you also have the endurance and you have to have the energy to be able to keep it up. I don't really feel like you can separate it. If you are really good technically but you don't have the endurance to keep it up and keep it going then [the movement] kind of dies."
- "Upper body expression. Usually the first thing... you see [is] their legs. How you can connect is through the upper body... that's the first thing I look for. If I'm drawn to it, then I start noticing their [technique]... but it's like are they going to perform for me, or are they just going to stay internal to perform because they can dance well. That's usually what pulls

me, it's that stage presence. [Upper body movement] projects out and that's what draws me in [and makes me] interested to watch."

Professional Performer Responses

Chad Michael Hall

*Modern Dance Performer, Choreographer
Faculty at Loyola Marymount University*

- I perform because there is a spirit in that, there is an expression, there is a connection to God... I commune when I dance. I feel incredibly alive when I'm on stage. I feel empowered, I feel important, and it's very validating... I perform because I enjoy being good at something... and I love the spotlight.
- I have a very specific warm-up that I always do for myself... I really focus on warming up my spine a lot, warming up my hip crease... I warm up my feet a lot... I spend a lot of time getting my whole body as warm as possible... I constantly move in the wings.
- One way I've learned to manage my nerves, because I lose my connection to the floor when I get nervous, and I've learned that it comes because I hold the tension (in my upper body)... I throw my weight down into the ground and then I rise. And every time I feel those nerves I shake it out and I shake it down into the ground. It's about rooting myself through my feet to the stage.
- One way I've learned to deal with anxiety is accepting it... and I'm going to turn that into energy that I can use... Is it going to control me or am I going to relinquish it and give it out.
- No... to an extent, of course. They are separate paths... The technical path [does not lead to the road of performance], that road is always there. I've seen people that are horrible technicians and amazing performers from day one... They are definitely separate paths, they are interdependent... my strength as a performer actually gave me confidence to be a better technician. They feed each other but they are not dependent upon each other at all. I've seen amazing technicians that suck as performers, they're just horrible. They look like robots and I'm like 'I'm not interested'. You know, I'd rather have this person: their leg doesn't go as high, their foot probably doesn't point as beautifully, their line isn't always the cleanest, but they perform the hell out of a work. They commit more fully... it's a different skill set.

Christopher "Lil 'C'" Toler

*Dancer, Choreographer, Co-Pioneer of Krump Dancing,
Featured Judge on "So You Think You Can Dance"*

- People usually think about the technical side first and they let everything else fall in place... I have to let the technical portion of it come later, that just has fall into place. I have to think about what's natural and organic, like what feels good. It's got to feel good to me... when you have movement you have to live in your movement... You have to deliver it... and that's what allows me to focus on the performance quality because nobody can deny anything that they feel.
- When it comes to technical ability, it just shows that you've memorized a formula. Perhaps you've memorized a formula that other people have memorized to. If you all have the same weapons... and you've been taught to use the weapons in the same way, how am I going to pick who has the best performance quality? Am I going to say 'Who does the same thing the best?' Technical ability can be learned. But having that spark is [a gift].
- I'm all about my feeling... there's like a up and down, the best thing about me is I'm a freestyler, I dance off of feeling so if I feel good I'm going to be amazing. But if I don't feel

it, I'm not going to be amazing. But I'm so solid, that my mediocre is still amazing. Because I invested so much in training... and how to play with movement.

- The anxiety I feel is hoping that I can have chemistry with the spirit of dance when I hit the stage. Sometimes you can have a good run at it and sometimes you can have a not so good run at it. There's really no way to ensure that you're going to have a perfect 10... because you have to factor in the variables all the time, mishaps, memory loss, you can forget a step... there could be a technical difficulty, somebody may bump into you... there are just so many things that can happen... the anxiety of me hoping that regardless of [those things] I want to feel good about it when I get off stage.

CHAPTER 8: Reading of Notable Performers

Mikhail Baryshnikov

When Baryshnikov prepared for his role as Albrecht in *Giselle* with the Kirov ballet, he had a lot to prove. Physically, he didn't "look the part" and "nobody was convinced [he] could do it."ⁱ He began to investigate and see what he could do to add to the already well-established role of a male lead in a classical ballet. As a performer seeking to prove himself capable of doing such role, he looked for ways to develop the character into something he could believe in for himself and that would be deemed acceptable to audiences that were familiar with this work.

Baryshnikov's outlook on performance is that

*"It is a pleasure of mind, body, eye. That jam session between the audience and the dancer. It is a bit of a voyeur experience, an experience of a masochist, and an experience of an observer. You can be totally involved, you could admire just the shape of it or you could be totally emotionally mushed up into the dance. It's so many surfaces..."*ⁱⁱ

Certainly Baryshnikov focused on all aspects of his performance quality. He paid much attention to characterization noting that it had to be clear, and consistent, especially when dancing the roles of leading men in classical repertory. In 2009, at age 61 he still held himself to the highest performance standards, stating "I am not trying to do material which I cannot do full out", making sure that he best represented his maturity not as a short-coming but as an additional layer of to the quality of his performance.ⁱⁱⁱ

Desmond Richardson^{iv}

Richardson has a strong view of the role of the performer, as one who communicates from a place of deep commitment and understanding, "As one who interprets choreography... It becomes essential for me to discover what the material means to me." In order to efficiently communicate the desires of the choreographer, a dancer must be able to represent the work fully – not by recreating it verbatim – but by bringing it to life in their own bodies. He states, "It is incumbent for [a performer] to be true to the material and not alter the intention of the work. We always have to remember that we are the instrument – to be of service to the dance and not ourselves."

Desmond Richardson has had the privilege of working with modern dance pioneers and legends that taught him much about the value of performance:

"One of the things I learned working with Alvin Ailey, Ulysses Dove, John Butler, William Forsythe, and other brilliant choreographers is that you must bring yourself completely to the work... I now know that it's only when you're willing to show yourself openly as an artist that you begin to truly share with others... it's the realism that makes your work accessible."

Richardson credits his maturity as a great attribute in his performance ability, "I'm able to listen better and investigate more maturely the work that I do. As my artistry advances, I have found a sense of calm."

Judith Jamison^v

"I dance because it is my easiest way of communicating... I find it very difficult to communicate verbally as directly as I can when I dance." When referring back to her first performances, which began at age six, Jamison recalls, "I wouldn't talk backstage. My mother couldn't get a word out of me." In 1985 at age 33, Jamison was already a celebrity in the modern dance world and had a reputation as the Ailey Company's front-runner. Yet, she still experienced the anxiety from her childhood ... "I still do that to this day. I get really nervous. People talk to me and get absolutely nothing. I won't say anything at all."

Jamison's mindset during a performance varies depending on the mood of the choreography she is performing.

"According to Eve requires total concentration... In Caravan I [concentrate] on counting, 'cause I learned Caravan at the very last minute... In Cry I think about fifty thousand things. That one's very hard to pin down as to what I think about. And during any of these dances all of a sudden 'I didn't get the groceries' will pop into my mind."

Jamison has been noted for her commanding stage presence, her agility, her large stature and long limbs. She captivated audiences for years and continued to nurture the future generation of performers in her service as Artistic Director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater for over two decades.

Paul Taylor^{vi}

In the time that Paul Taylor was performing he was joy to all audiences who viewed him. He often surprised them with his strength, power, precision, lyricism, and buoyancy. Taylor admits his experience with performance anxiety by saying he had "extreme jitters. I never got over that. The more experience I had, the more nervous I got." He even had a very meticulous routine in preparation for a performance. As he describes it, Taylor "went to the theater very early and did a very thorough warm-up and a rehearsal and put [his] costume and makeup on and then did another warm-up and timed it all very carefully."

When asked to recall his experience as a performer Paul Taylor declares, "I remember being very aware [while onstage], especially in my ears. I could hear very acutely when I performed. I could hear whispers in the back of the house. I could hear offstage activity. The senses get very hyped up... Performing necessitates a very high degree of awareness." In order to combat this hyper awareness, Taylor placed emphasis on the elimination of any distracting thoughts, stating "I have to filter out all outside things if I want to do something fully."

Matthew Rushing^{vii}

Matthew Rushing is a principal dancer with the Ailey Company, and has been described as someone who is fully committed to his movement, and it is obvious that he has faith in what he is doing. Rushing always invests time in to investigating his character and making sure he can fulfill the role that he is asked to portray. When speaking about his role as the lead man in "*Wade in the Water*" (from *Revelations*):

"For eight years, I waited. I would actually pray at night to do that role! ... My identity is in Revelations, just as it's in the Ailey Company. I'm a very spiritual person; it's a huge part of me. So when I finally danced it, it was so innate it needed no explanation. I learned the steps, and the steps and the music told the story. Whenever I dance it, it's like the ultimate form of self-expression."

Rushing feels a great deal of respect for his audience, because of the reputation of the company he already knows their expectations for his performance, so he feel obligated to bring himself fully present and prepared:

"For me to go onstage only halfway prepared, and for me not to commit myself one hundred percent-- I would feel like I was cheating myself and I'm cheating the audience. And sometimes you really just don't feel like it, because you're tired, or you have your own problems, but the audience doesn't care if

your hamstring is pulled; they don't care if you just had an argument. The only thing they see is you out there onstage. So how could you cheat them or yourself?"

ⁱ Gottlieb, Robert S. "Mikhail Baryshnikov (Giselle)." *Reading Dance: a Gathering of Memoirs, Reportage, Criticism, Profiles, Interviews, and Some Uncategorizable Extras*. New York: Pantheon, 2008. 270-73. Print.

ⁱⁱ King, "CNN.com - Transcripts: Interview with Mikhail Baryshnikov." CNN.com - Breaking News, U.S., World, Weather, Entertainment & Video News. 07 Feb. 2001. Web. 07 May 2010. <<http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0205/05/lklw.00.html>>.

ⁱⁱⁱ LaRocco, Claudia. "He Has a Pass to Dance as Long as He Wants." *The New York Times* 14 May 2009, Arts sec. Web. 6 May 2010. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/17/arts/dance/17laro.html>>.

^{iv} Eichenbaum, Rose, and Aron Hirt-Manheimer. *The Dancer Within: Intimate Conversations with Great Dancers*. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan UP, 2008. 237-42. Print

^v Lyle, Cynthia. *Dancers on Dancing*. New York: Sterling Pub., 1979. 95-106. Print.

^{vi} Lyle, Cynthia. *Dancers on Dancing*. New York: Sterling Pub., 1979. 107-22. Print.

^{vii} Elia, Susan. "Rushing Toward Greatness." *Dance Magazine* 73.11 (1999): 62. MasterFILE Premier. EBSCO. Web. 7 May 2010.

CHAPTER 9: Final Reflection

Before embarking upon this journey to discover what it truly means to be a performer, I still doubted my ability to be successful within the realm of professional dance. Because of my lack of consistent training, I faced many anxieties that carried over from freshman year, which was the year I returned to dancing. Freshman year I was nearly invisible. I was fearful and shy yet the fulfillment I received from my dance education motivated me to pursue dance seriously as a career. Throughout my experience as a dance major I slowly began to emerge from my shell. Yet, because of my self-doubt I never fully recognized my achievements because I only saw my flaws.

The experience that I have had chronicling my own growth as a performer in the work entitled, "Standing the Middle of Chaos... This Could Be Your Finest Hour" has given me the utmost confidence that I would have never realized had I not taken on such an extensive project. Receiving critical constructive feedback is what allowed me to take full advantage of my last few months within this phenomenal department. I am aware of things that I need work on, I can now acknowledge my strengths as a performer. I know my worth and value and what I can contribute to a community of dancers.

It was very comforting and valuable to spend more time with my own thought about performance while also comparing them to the perceptions of my peers, working professionals, and historical performers. I have learned through this research that everyone has entirely separate perspective on the rehearsal and performance process from how they learn, to what they focus on, where their confidence lies, what they value, and how they prepare themselves for a solid performance. Yet, through talking to these dancers, and reading what others have to say about performance I have learned that we all have strengths and challenges. We all are in a constant state of improvement because there will never be a state of perfection. We all have our own ways of calming anxieties, and it was comforting to know that even professionals and historical performers share the same issues.

Completing this thesis has truly led me on a journey TO establishing my self-confidence as a performer. The most significant moment of my thesis was when I reviewed the hours of footage I acquired. When I observed myself, I saw the extent of my improvement from the first rehearsal to the final performance. As a result of documenting, and reviewing my personal journey as a performer in Ursula Payne's work, I have emerged from this process as a young woman who is mature, confident in her own body, and unafraid. Overall, this project has made a performance career seem a lot more attainable to me. It no longer seems out of reach or unfathomable, but I can now truly see myself as someone who ready and able to take the professional world by storm.

Dance Reflection/Summaries

Theory Classes

260: Laban Movement Analysis, Damon Rago

- Acquired the knowledge and skills to verbally communicate, and write about movement using the LMA/Bartenieff theory and language.
- Created movement studies based on explorations/improvisations guided by the use of LMA fundamentals of Effort, Shape, and Space.
- We learned to identify and create within our own bodies the three fundamentals:
 Effort: flow, weight, space, time
 Shape: shape forms, modes of shape change, shape qualities,
 Space: kinesphere, spatial intent
- At the conclusion of the semester we created a performance exhibit in the Laband Art Gallery in which we each presented a work that we created, demonstrating one aspect of LMA that we had learned throughout the course. People in attendance were able to walk through the gallery and check out each exhibit, as it was ongoing.

281: History of Dance Theatre, Dr. Jill Nunes Jensen

- Before taking this course I had no prior knowledge of the origins of ballet and modern dance technique.
- I became very interested in studying the anthropological context of ethnic dances as represented on the concert dance stage.
- Learned to make connections between today's working artists and pioneers of the techniques and genres we have studied from history.
- In this class I was prompted to write a review of a live dance performance, which challenged my ability to write a clear, coherent viewpoint on the aesthetic qualities of an artist in light of their place in dance history.

381: To Dance is Human, Judy Scalin

- In this course we were prompted to investigate the qualities of movement that make it essential to the study of human life and culture.
- To define differing aesthetics of movement that makes them specific to the culture from which they are derived.
- To see movement as a mode of storytelling, through which all people may understand as a universal language.
- Cultivated interest in the stories of others, in the aspects of their lives I was unfamiliar with, and to acknowledge how each of our stories contributes to the larger story of our dance community.
- Opened my eyes to the subtle details about my environment, how it is conducive to my daily experience, and shapes my life.

480/481: Kinesiology for Dancers I/II, Mavis Rode

- We learned how muscles function in order to produce movement in relation to dance.
- We evaluated our own bodies and discovered ways to improve strength, flexibility, and range of motion.

- Learned the origins and insertion points of muscles, which led to increased knowledge of how we should move.
- We studied proper placement and alignment of the body, in order to sustain our bodily health and increase our comprehension of injury prevention.

484: Principles of Teaching Dance, Diana Cummins

- In this class I learned a lot about the aspect of dance education that I had not previously known, such as the *California Visual and Performance Art Framework, K-12*, the *National Dance Educational Standards*, and the
- Learned the different types of learning modalities, and the multiple intelligences theory as proposed by Howard Gardner.
- During the course of this class we were given several opportunities to practice teaching such as creating a progressive warm-up that got students prepared to engage in class work. Also, created a lesson plan with a clear goal in mind for the class time and presenting it in an instructional setting. I was given feedback on how to improve the lesson for the students as well as make it more beneficial for me to instruct.
- At the end of the course I understood how to make a unit plan that expanded over multiple class periods and allowed for the development and cultivation of creative arts skills as well as critical thinking skills.
- I learned how to effectively plan a class.
- We explored different methods of presenting work that involved inquiry and imaginative thinking amongst the students.

Composition Classes

160/161: Fundamentals of Dance Composition I/II, Judy Scalin

- Learned the many steps involved in the creative process of making dances, and the investment time needed in order to create good quality work.
- Guided improvisation increased our exploration and discovery of new movement possibilities.
- Introduction to the elements of dance (time, space, and energy), which were applied to the development of dance studies.
- By dialoging in class and writing about dance studies I learned to observe, critique, and speak about dance in an articulate manner.
- Composed and performed solos and group dances throughout the semester using different tools and starting points, along with private coaching sessions in order to cultivate movement into a rich dance study.

262: Dance Styles & Forms, Scott Heitzerling

- Using techniques and prompts to experiment with movement that is unfamiliar to your normal patterning of movement.
- Understanding the use of gesture, motif, and theme within movement studies.
- Discovering new ways of moving by using techniques such as chance procedures and augmentation to create new movement vocabulary.
- I learned a different appreciation of the correlation between dance and music.
- I composed several different works based upon different approaches to composition, and investigated these works in solo, duet, and trio forms.

362: Choreography Workshop

- Participated in weekly workshops for the first 5 weeks of the semester, exploring different choreographic techniques such as methods of working, collaboration, improvisation, variation, phrase, motif, structure and form.
- Give feedback to peers upon seeing their works in progress.
- Creating original dance work to be developed over the course of the semester and performed in one of the spring venues.
- Learned the value of collaboration in the choreographic process.

Technique Classes

202: Modern II, Damon Rago

- In this class I was introduced to the concept of “head-tail” connection.
- The focus of this class was the proper placement of the pelvis in relation to the spine.
- We also learned the other Bartenieff Fundamental Patterns of Total Body Connectivity: *Breath, Core-Distal Connectivity, Head-Tail Connectivity, Upper-Lower Connectivity, Head-Tail Connectivity, Body-Half Connectivity & Cross-Lateral Connectivity* and applied them to our movement.
- I learned the capabilities and the limitations of my body.
- At the end of this course I was able to understand the full mechanics of proper body organization to move in and out of the floor.

302: Modern III, Yvette Wulff

- Learned the fundamentals of Lewitsky technique, based on the teachings of Bella Lewitsky.
- Began to understand modern technique as a tool to develop idea alignment and overall placement.
- In this class I learned about control, precision, and creating strong lines.
- Refined use of artistry and expression in movement choices.

320: Ballet III, Tekla Kostek

- In my first semester of taking this course, it was the first time I had a ballet class in over six years. I was very uncomfortable and it was hard to quiet my anxieties in order to have engaged in the learning opportunity that I was being offered.
- I really began to understand the functionality of proper alignment and placement as it related to effort and execution.
- This class helped me to increase my vocabulary of certain steps and ballet terms that I was unfamiliar with.
- The focus of this class was to become comfortable with movement, alignment, and articulation.
- During the third semester of this class, I really began to cultivate the proper technique needed, and learned to move gracefully without using so much tension and force.

342: Jazz III

- This course was my first introduction to contemporary dance technique, which is now one of my favorite genres of dance.
- We did repetitive combinations across the floor such as jazz walks, and pique turns, which helped to build our coordination and dynamic in those areas.
- Fall 2007 was the first time I had taken a jazz class in about 7 years; by the end of Spring 2008 I had become more comfortable with the technique.
- Learned the proper usage of core stabilization in relation to turns such as piroettes and attitude turns.

- I learned how to do leaps and jumps that I had never previously attempted and learned more about my own personal movement quality.

345: Jazz IV, Mike Esperanza

- In Mike's class I was able to really improve my ability to learn and execute phrases at a very rapid pace.
- Growth in performance quality was achieved throughout the semester as we were encouraged to play and make the phrases our own personal story
- In this class I was called to experiment with dynamic because of the varying degrees of movement qualities that were present in one phrase.
- Creating clean and long lines were emphasized throughout the class.
- The attention to detail of the choreography challenged my musicality and rhythmic intelligence.

345: Jazz IV, Paige Porter

- In this class we kept the same combinations for over half the semester. I greatly appreciated this because it allowed me to stop thinking about the sequence/phrasing of the combination but to start focusing in on certain aspects of technique and performance that I could improve. Each week there was something more to gain from a specific combination.
- There was a 40-minute warm-up that really focused in on spinal articulation and isolation of the ribcage. It also really emphasized the opening up and increasing of fluidity in the hip joints.
- In this class I truly began to gain confidence in movement and learn to let my personality shine through my dancing.
- This was a challenging course because of nature of the sharp accents, and clear lines that needed to be created which I was unfamiliar with at the start of the semester.
- In this class I started to explore and cultivate the qualities of my own personal movement style while also staying in the parameters of creating the tone that was set by the instructor.
- In the class I was called upon to be specific and improve the clarity of my movement.

347: Hip-Hop, Nick Long

- Warm-ups incorporated the building up of stamina and also drills to improve core and arm strength.
- In this class we focused on more commercial hip-hop movement than the foundations and origins of hip hop movement.
- We explored the various styles and movement qualities that fall under the category of hip-hop dance.
- We were tested on the choreography and expected to retain all information and corrections given about performance quality.
- At the end of the semester we were allowed to create a short hip-hop sequence to display our own creativity within the technique.

394: Dunham Technique, Sarah Anindo Marshall

- Accepted the challenge of the physicality and stamina involved in properly executing the Dunham technique.
- Increased musicality and ability to focus, especially with the implement of live drumming.
- Learned about the history of Katherine Dunham, her work and her aesthetic quality of movement.
- Learned the fundamentals of Dunham technique, which is a combination of ballet, modern, and ethnic movement from such countries as Haiti, Brazil, Cuba and several African countries.

- Practices and executed traveling isolations, Dunham walk, Prance, turns, battlement, Rocking horse, contraction series, fall and recover, leg extensions, and other staples of the Dunham technique.
- I also learned about the form and function of each movement within the technique, and where it originated.

397: Dance of Africa, Monti Ellison

- Although I have performed African dance before, it was the first time I had taken an African dance class. Fully engaging in this class led to the connections between traditional folk dance and current/present-day dance forms.
- Learned how to maintain the polyrhythmic movements of several different body parts with ease and control.
- Cardiovascular strength and stamina were greatly improved over the course of the semester.
- History and origin of traditional African movement was discussed.
- Gained knowledge of the styling, coordination, and principles of African dance.
- Encouraged a greater awareness of the dancer/drummer relationship.

398: Intermediate Hip-Hop, Hassan Christopher

- Throughout the semester, we learned the origins and history of various styles of movement within the umbrella of Hip-Hop dance.
- I focused on learning the technique and proper form needed to execute sharp movements such as “popping and locking”, arm balances (freezes), and various break dancing moves.
- We did daily conditioning exercises that targeted specific muscle groups needed for the intricacy and control required for such movement.
- A large part of the class was focused on musicality and rhythm, which is the foundation of all hip-hop dances.
- My favorite part of class was that the “Old School Foundation” was blended with “New School Innovation”. It allowed for all of the students to find their own expression within the style and engage in the truly evolving nature of this style of dance.

398: Int/Adv Ballet, Tekla Kostek

- Class began with a warm-up and refocusing of the energy for both mind and body. We started with light stretches, breathing exercises, and other techniques just to get us in our bodies and in the proper mindset to fully engage in the class session.
- Each few weeks we concentrated on a specific aspect of ballet technique – breath, performance, clarity, core engagement, grounding, etc. – which narrowed our focus during class, creating short-term goals that led to comprehensive improvement upon a much larger scale.
- Gained insight about how full body movement is initiated from the core and not from the limbs.
- Learned the importance of opposition in movement and how that leads to full body engagement as well as balance.
- Due to the mixed levels in this class, it was sometimes difficult for me to quickly understand the combinations. Over the course of a semester I learned to break down very complex sequences of steps in order to properly analyze them and execute them.
- Analyzed and discussed improper placement techniques that lead to insufficient muscle engagement, poor joint articulation and diminished performance quality.
- I feel that this class was more of a workshop experience in that we spent more time discussing where the strength and power in movement should originate.

398: Int/Adv Jazz Workshop, Paige Porter

- At the beginning of each semester we set individual goals to improve a certain area of our jazz technique that we wish to achieve growth in by the end of the semester. During each class session we focus on these goals while performing each combination.
- Each semester I was set up with a buddy who is also working on a goal that may be similar to the one I was working on or completely different. We are paired based on our learning style, strengths and weaknesses, and other determining factors. Throughout the semester we are responsible for keeping one another focused, giving feedback and also facilitating the growth of one another through this process.
- Weekly one-on-one coaching sessions, that infused the knowledge gained within class time along with confronting personal weaknesses in order to cultivate growth in a specific area.
- In order to properly monitor our growth, class sessions and coaching session are filmed so that we may begin to watch ourselves and see what we need to work on and also to see how much we have changed/improved.
- 45 minute warm-ups focused on challenging the core muscles, increasing flexibility, improving joint articulation, releasing tension in movement, and full body conditioning.

402: Modern IV, Chad Hall

- During the first week of class we were asked to set goals for ourselves so that we may have a clear focus for the entirety of the semester.
- Expanded my knowledge of my own personal ability and exposed the potentiality for improvement in modern technique.
- I really began to take risks and experiment with the complexity of this work, and it opened up a variety of discoveries about my technique and performance quality.
- I gained a greater understanding of focus and how it relates to the flow of momentum within the movement phrases.
- I greatly increased my knowledge of body organization and awareness.
- In this class we were very concerned with the placement of the pelvis and understood it as being the center of weight of the body, which led us to manipulate the centeredness/off-centeredness of ourselves by controlling where the pelvis was in space.
- Conditioning phrases helped us to understand proper placement and articulation of the joints in order to increase strength and to gain vital information for injury prevention.
- Developed a true sense of professionalism by understanding the discipline and commitment it takes to become a working artist.
- The use of plié was emphasized for the purpose of traveling through space, moving in and out of the floor with clarity, and efficiently transitioning through sequences of movement.
- Learned to make clear movement choices in performance.

403: Friday Modern Dance Workshop, Holly Johnston

- Greater understanding of the breath as related to the athleticism required in release technique.
- Class combinations allowed for focus, exploration and investigation of the body in relations to different principles such as spiral, release, body-half, cross-lateral, momentum, gravity, and attack.
- Being placed in a class with advanced level dancers allowed me to challenge myself to be able to keep up with them.

- Gained confidence and proficiency in improvisation exercises – free, guided, individual, contact, and group work.
- Increased my overall body coordination, beginning to understand how each part of the body relates to each other, especially when giving into the pull of gravity or letting momentum pull my weight.

404: Modern V, Holly Johnston

- Constantly analyzed the quality of movement in each class session. Specific issues were addressed concerning sequence, dynamic, pathways, aestheticism, alignment, placement, and time/rhythm. We were expected to take the corrections and apply them immediately to the next repetition of the combination. Also, we were encouraged to experiment with the movement phrase in order to discover a variety of methods for achieving specific goals in the class work.
- Developed a greater sense of kinesthetic awareness and body coordination.
- Increased sequencing ability when learning new combinations in class.
- Cultivation of performance ability and in-depth professional training in an effort to becoming working artists upon graduation.
- Built up stamina and strength needed to execute such demanding work.
- Warm-up phrases were concentrated on full body connectivity, and analyzing what the condition of your body was in the present moment. They concentrated on just “getting in the body” while also lightly stretching and conditioning simultaneously.
- Confronted issues with quickly picking up sequences of movement, and discovered techniques to benefit my personal learning style. Doing this allowed me to fully engage in the movement while not having to think about steps.

420: Ballet IV, Aimee Gaudio

- This class challenged me to learn more complex sequences of movement than I had been given in ballet III. Also, it challenged me to analyze the movement in order to facilitate improvement.
- Expanded my knowledge of ballet terminology with study sheets and exams that were given twice a semester.
- Focus on hand-epaulment-head coordination was emphasized.
- Learned the correct aesthetics of ballet, and placement of the head and arms in relation to the head.
- Received feedback on performance quality of movement, rather than just the technical aspects.
- Increased strength of footwork and articulation of feet.
- Gained confidence in ballet technique and ability.

498: Musical Theater Workshop

- Introduction to the movement qualities of musical theater.
- Introduction to the technique of singing while dancing, or singing after dancing.
- Built strength and stamina for high energy, fast-paced classical jazz work.
- Participated in workshops with guests whom are currently working in the field, received advice and asked questions about their experiences.
- Explored the diversity and variety of thematic content within musicals and learned how to get into character for specific roles.
- Gained insight into the qualities, strengths, and skills required to become a working artists in the world of musical theater.

Other

183: Stagecraft for Dancers

- I learned of several types of lighting devices, the quality of the beam and textures they create, the types of accessories they use to produce different effects, and the amount of power/electricity needed to supply a given number of lights for a specific purpose.
- We also learned about how sound works and is produced through different types of outlets. This will help us to utilize the best source of sound media available to produce the clearest and sharpest quality music depending on the venue.
- Introduction to lighting theory: learned the different types of color mixing and the types of tools available to create complex environments on the stage.
- Became familiar with the different types of stages used in theater and dance. Also, learned to read the multitude of drawings used in order to adequately portray the desired design to those building it.
- I learned how to better communicate with technical experts in their language.
- This class helped me to greatly appreciate all of technicians that help to produce and run a dance performance.

353: Pilates Lab

- Acquired greater understanding of proper alignment, placement, and posture as it relates to all dance movement.
- Gained strength and knowledge of core connectivity to increase stability in movement.
- Learned the importance of breath and how it supports the posture and alignment of the body.
- Discovered the limitations of my body along with my strengths and weaknesses, in order to develop a well-balanced musculoskeletal system.
- Due to the very small ratio 3:1 of student to instructor, we were able to get very personalized regimens specific to our goals and needs for performance growth, injury prevention, and overall wellness.

382: Drumming for Dance, Monti Ellison

- Acquired basic hand drumming skills.
- Learned the names and tonal qualities of various different African drums (d'jembe, d'jun d'jun, ewe and bougarabo).
- Practiced the execution of types of hand coordination used to produce three distinct sounds: bass, tone, and smack.
- Developed knowledge of keeping time, patterns of time, and subdividing time.

376: Yoga for Dancers (Holly Johnston)

- From this semester of yoga I discovered the source of musculoskeletal imbalances in certain areas, and learned which muscles to stretch and/or strengthen in order to achieve a greater sense of balance throughout my body.
- Learned to properly execute standing and seated postures and analyze which muscles were being stretched and/or strengthened in each.
- Discovered steady, consistent motion – utilizing the breath to initiate the flow of movement.
- Observed how regular yoga practice can benefit overall well being (mental, physical, spiritual).

498: Careers in Dance

Dance Perspectives: Disembodiment and Creativity

In today's society, many people deem the body and mind as two unrelated entities. There is a sort of "anti-body bias" that has become prominent in society supporting the view of the mind taking precedence over the body. This idea of dualism is embedded into our lifestyles, and it is obvious by the values of our culture. Often, one encounters someone in their life that appears entirely disconnected from his or her body. The body is simply developed into a housing complex for the brain reduced to the level of carrying out basic instructions for daily life given by the brain. The body is not regarded as a means of expression and communication, but rather diminished to "the status of a sign ... made into an object of purely mental operations" (Jackson, 1983, p. 329). It becomes functional, merely used for "transporting us on a daily basis and for accomplishing needed tasks" (Minton, 1989 p. 2). Many adults lack a clear understanding of bodily intelligence and it is evident that verbal, linguistic, and logical intelligences are regarded as superior in the learning process and educational system. As children progress through the educational system from kindergarten to college, they are slowly taught to disregard the intelligence their bodies have and begin to live only in their brains. This leads to a lack of creativity and ultimately affects the way they view status and success within society.

A fallacy exists amongst intellectuals that the body is not of equal stature with the mind and therefore unimportant in and of itself. This erroneous belief stems from a theory known today as the Cartesian Split, presented by 17th century philosopher René Decartes (as paraphrased in Ryle) which concludes that people live two histories "one consisting of what happens to his body, the other consisting of what happens in and to his mind" (Ryle, 1970, p. 28). Although, this idea originated over 300 years ago during the Age of Enlightenment, it is an

argument that has seeped down over the years and consequently established many underlying standards within our society.

One is seen as having the utmost intelligence if he or she excels in language, mathematics or the sciences. Students that are most valued in classroom settings are the ones who succeed on vocabulary tests, score highly on math quizzes, and construct impressive science projects. This idea very well translates into our adult lives because the people we determine to be successful members of society are accountants, doctors, lawyers, educators, and scientific researchers. People in such professions are held in high esteem for being our best and brightest; yet this hierarchy seems to unfairly cater to one type of individual. There are other types of successes that occur in many areas of interest. What about construction workers, musicians, sales representatives, athletes, newscasters, dancers, architects, and actors? These occupations are seen as less intellectual, less significant, and held inferior to careers such as dentist, librarian, and university professor.

From the above-mentioned societal values, it can be asserted that the higher regarded careers are directly related to the higher regarded intelligences. It affirms the proposal of the mind taking precedence over the body because it seems as though the work of an accountant, lawyer, or educator takes place entirely within the mind and has absolutely nothing to do with the body. Therefore, society continues to maintain the idea that only mental intelligence, not bodily intelligence, is necessary to pursue a successful life. As stated by neuropsychologist and educator Carla Hannaford (1995),

This divorce between the 'mental' and 'physical' has not infrequently been coupled with a notion that what we do with our bodies is somehow less special, than those problem-

solving routines carried out chiefly through the use of language, logic, or some other relatively abstract symbolic system. (p. 98)

By increasing knowledge of the interdependent relationship between the body and mind, the underlying suggestion by modern society that the Cartesian split is true could eventually be obliterated.

Unfortunately, this ideology is reflected in standards and values of the current educational system in America, which is unfairly geared towards those whom are simply mind intelligent, rarely catering to students who are different types of learners like those who learn by doing and touching, or the ones whose talents do not lie in the conventional mathematical, logical, and linguistic forms around which most classroom environments are centered. As defined by developmental psychologist Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory, there are seven intelligences including musical, logical-mathematical, linguistic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, spatial, and bodily-kinesthetic. Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence is "the ability to solve problems or to fashion products using one's whole body, or parts of the body" (Gardner, 1993, p. 9). Dancers, athletes, surgeons, and craftspeople are said to exhibit this form of intelligence. Sadly, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence is not held in high regard by schools and teachers alike. Therefore, children are not given freedom to explore the mental and physical connection that Cartesian dualism denies. It follows the idea that movement is not important in serious matters such as school or thinking. Anytime movement is allowed freely it is during recess, lunch, or physical education, seen as separate from goals of the classroom and a break from the cognitive learning reserved for outdoors or the gymnasium.

From the time we are young children and begin attending school, we are told to sit still, pay attention, and stop moving around so that it is not distracting. We are constantly restricted

from moving, and told that it is inhibiting our learning. Little do our parents, guardians, babysitters, and teachers know, movement is not only enhancing our learning experience, but it is essential to the learning and development of our brains. Movement is a vital part of the process that we believe is all in our heads, which actually takes place in our bodies when we learn and develop mentally. "Movement is an indispensable part of learning and thinking. Each movement becomes a vital link to learning and thought processing." (Hannaford, 1995, p. 107)

If movement is such an essential tool to learning, why has it been banned from our classrooms? Children are punished for moving, they are called disruptions to the class and are labeled as unintelligent or attention disordered. These children are falsely labeled as troublesome, yet are likely dominantly kinesthetic learners. If teachers do not appeal to their specific learning modality there should be no surprise about their competence level with the subjects and ideas they are being taught. Of course no teacher can appeal to each intelligence style every day, but centering a few lessons around a similar idea and accommodating each type of intelligence within the comprehensive unit plan gives each student a fair chance at their education.

Stereotypically, athletes do not do well in school. In order to become a great athlete one must be very body-smart, hands-on, and well coordinated. Clearly, these are bodily-kinesthetically intelligent people who learn by doing, playing games, engaging in activities, using props, and role-playing. Many teachers will not take the time to formulate lessons that will include these types of learning devices in order to create an effective way for bodily-kinesthetic learners to grasp new concepts and ideas.

Dance can be used as a cross-curricular method in order to engage students in non-conventional methods in order to gain knowledge about a specific area in which they are

learning. There are hundreds of teaching tools available in which students may engage in activities that link science, language arts, history, and even mathematics to dance. Students can create dances using geometric shapes as a source of inspiration. They may learn about an ancient culture by studying the types of dance they did, and why certain movements are specific to that group of people. Writing about creative improvisation experiences, or their journey to complete a group dance project will help them to learn to write insightfully and reflect upon what discoveries they have made in their own learning process. Children should have dance and/or movement as an integral part of their education because of the multi-faceted impact it has upon their mental growth and development of character.

Being educated in a system that disregards this type of interaction as a beneficial for its students, leads to the deterioration of creative perception within the mind of a young child. As children progress through each grade level their bodily awareness slowly diminishes because of their being placed behind stiff desks for 6-8 hours a day, and told to only exercise their brains. By the time people reach colleges and universities, they may be completely disembodied and uncoordinated lacking the consciousness and self-awareness they encompassed just a decade earlier.

Dance researcher and instructor Sandra Cerny Minton states that adults are not a home in their bodies and must be retrained to have the same awareness they had as children. (Minton, 1989, p. vii) Because of the society's lack of attentiveness to the value of the body, many adults have learned to treat their bodies as objects, a piece of property that they own and manipulate rather than it being interrelated to their conscious self (Gallagher, 2005, pp. 26-27). One is with their body in their body each moment of their lives, yet, "our attention is directed away from the

body, toward the environment or toward some project we are undertaking” (Gallagher, 2005, p. 27).

Bodily awareness is essential for effectively performing daily tasks we take for granted such as standing up, sitting down, lifting, carrying, ascending and descending stairs, and even walking. To be cognizant of these frequently executed actions is vital to the mechanical efficiency of one’s muscles and joints, and as a result one will develop strong movement patterns within his or her body that will keep them moving fully for the rest of their years. Being conscious of one’s body in relation to one’s environment and the bodies of others prevents clumsiness, and avoids injury by allowing one to move dexterously throughout their day. For instance, if one is playing a sport and is ignorant of one’s own strength he or she may underestimate the force of bodily contact and harm oneself or others. If one consistently throws his or her weight around carelessly as when sitting on the floor or on a bed, he or she is setting themselves up for a lifetime of bodily ailments as repetitive movements in such reckless manner will ultimately prove harmful to one’s body over time.

Many psychologists and philosophers agree that bodily awareness is a distinct form of consciousness (Gallagher, 2005, 7). Increasing one’s awareness of their body increases one’s awareness of self and others. Infants begin to make discoveries about themselves through movement and interacting with their environment. They become aware of their bodies through touching, feeling, rolling, crawling, discovering the effects of momentum, weight, and gravity as they learn to sit, stand and walk. They become conscious of the laws of nature through experiencing it in their bodies, not by studying. Bartenieff Fundamentals is a method of full body connectivity developed by dancer and physiotherapist Irmgard Bartenieff that seeks to return us to the primal connective patterns we were born with. The Fundamental Patterns for Total-Body

Connectivity mimic the fluidity of the natural coordination we have as infants, and are modeled after each stage of development within the formative years of life.(Hackney, 1998, p. 15).

Most importantly the function of the body as a means of expression goes beyond verbal language. With increased understanding of one's body comes increased ability to express oneself non-verbally (Minton, 1989, p. 125). Non-verbal communication or body language often reveals what spoken words do not. A person may make known what kind of mood they are in through a common gesture, or subconsciously reveal the degree of intimacy of a relationship with another in the proximity of their body to another's body. According to Peggy Hackney (1998) a colleague of Bartenieff's in the 1960s and 70s, the fundamental nature of making connections and creating relationships, "is a skill which begins 'at home', within our own bodies ..." (p. v) and that "it is in our process of moving ... that we create our embodied existence. As we move we are always making connections, creating relationships, both within ourselves and between ourselves and the world" in an effort to live as fully embodied, fully present human beings (Hackney, 1998, p. 14).

For young children, the body is not only a tool for communicating, but it is a tool of learning and investigation. Children use their bodies and movement to explore their environment and movement should be heavily incorporated into their daily educational endeavors. By denying them access to their customary method of acquiring knowledge they are taught that is self-expression is wrong. This greatly affects their creative nature and leads them down a path of struggling (or excelling) in logical-mathematical intelligence, linguistic intelligence, never having the opportunity to venture into the field of imaginative, artistic, and inventive exploration.

In order to be artistic, one must not be afraid of being wrong, yet our educational system [and society] stigmatizes mistakes (Robinson, 2006). Sooner or later, the desire to be creative is

absent as children become accustomed to the idea that artistic talents are of no value. In the linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences there is always one right answer, therefore everything else is wrong. Where creativity is involved there can be no wrong answers, but plenty of right ones. For a change to take place the educational systems must stop “educating people out of their creativity” and begin to design ways of integrating the core of creativity – which is embodiment – into classrooms and lessons plans across the nation.

“We must use the gift of human imagination wisely .. and the only way we'll do it is by seeing our creative capacities for the richness they are, and seeing our children for the hope that they are... our task is to educate their whole being.” (Robinson, 2006)

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IV: Aesthetic Statement

My journey in discovering my own personal movement style, as led me to appreciate the diversity of energies and qualities of several different genres of dance. When I see tap dancers creating intricate, distinct sounds while barely moving their feet it makes me nod my head to the rhythm they are creating. As I watch krump dancers truly in their element, the aggressiveness of the movement of their limbs, as they attack the movement from their core, my heart moves to the pulse of the emotional tone they are establishing. Dancers doing extremely physical and athletic modern work, taking risks foreign to most gymnasts and daredevils, it moves me to shake my head in disbelief at the feats they are accomplishing. I get so excited observing the precision and meticulousness of exceptionally well-trained technical dancers that I want to jump right out of my skin. Other times I am so in awe of their emotional presence that I am simply moved to tears. There are many types of movement qualities that appeal to me, found within several different genres of dance. What I truly value as a mover, a watcher, and a dance artist is construction of shape, the element of surprise, bodily intelligence, emotion and musicality.

There are several ways in which the shape and the form of the body appeal to me. I love to see the clean lines of the Horton technique. The specificity of the language makes it thrilling to watch, because it registers differently within each dancer's body. It is an amazing feat when the body goes into the perfect lateral T shape, and even more impressive to see the shape maintained in a jump, or multiple turns. To witness dancers move in and out of the shapes with ease and swiftness is awe-inspiring. The geometry of this technique is beautiful to me. There are powerful triangles, sharp angles, hard square positions, and strong lines. I love the precision that is required within this technique. There is a certain type of attack that is needed within the dancers to attain the percussiveness of the exercises within the technique. The exemplary company that dances within this style of dance is the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Because of Ailey's work with Horton this company has become the epitome of a company utilizing the Horton technique, with precision and control still able to present stories and evoke emotional tones without being constrained by the boundaries of the technique.

Also, unconventional ways of constructing the body are very beautiful. It is easy for someone to create a known shape such as an angle, a lateral, a spiral, or a curve. When a choreographer takes the liberty to experiment and mold the body into some type of awkward, quirky, innovative shape it really shows you the true genius of the dance maker, and the intelligence needed of the dancer to accomplish something that is definitely unfamiliar in their own body. I also value how one moves in and out of a specific shape, in a unique or classical movement vocabulary utilizing dynamic and spatial patterns to really make sure you see what they have created on the human body.

A form of dance that is beginning to emerge as a newer genre of hip-hop, utilizes this unconventional construction of shape within the body while also embodying fanatical emotion within the movement. Krump dancing is something that comes strictly from a lifestyle, therefore the emotion is readily available without it being an additional layer of performance that must be manufactured on top of the complexity of the movement. It is something that was born through the personal experiences of those who began the krump movement. These dancers achieve things with their bodies that many classically trained dancers could not. Their confidence, their energy, their attack, and their ferocity are all qualities that lend to the signature aggressiveness associated with this genre. Miniscule pulses in the chest build and build until a full-embodied movement explodes from that place of origin. It is this burst of energy that comes from the unanswered tension created from the constant pulsing. This is the element of surprise contained within krump movement that draws me towards it. The movement is forceful and very direct, heavily weighted, and in your face. The spirit of this style is confrontational and dauntless, the passion and

determination behind the movement is always brought forth, along with the intricacies and fluidity of the genre.

Another emerging movement vocabulary I am drawn toward is exemplified by the use of quick, sharp, bound motions that involve specific articulation of multiple joints. It has been seen in many styles of the hip-hop dance genre, and are now becoming more common as new styles of jazz dance have materialized. In hip-hop dance this type of movement can present itself in several forms. One form known as "isolations" are very sharp, sudden movements, light weight, very direct and in bound flow, that often involve a small movement at one joint such as turning the head, flexing or extending an elbow, or slightly bending the knee. They are often strung together as a long chain of movement and the precision needed to execute a sequence of isolations is unbelievable. These differ from the isolations we see in classical jazz that involve fluid connected movement of larger sections of the body such as the ribcage or the hips in that they are very staccato and miniscule, as if one were taking snapshots of movement and placing them one after the other.

As a mover this style appeals to me because I am aware of the immense amount of bodily intelligence it takes to be able to call upon specific body parts to move at such a quick tempo and to sometimes keep the entire torso quiet. In newer forms of jazz dance these movements often maintain the same staccato quality, yet, many choreographers create movement that is more free flow in comparison to the bound nature of hip-hop isolations. When those movements come one after the other in a large sequence which leads into a long awaited sustained release it provides a visceral feeling within me as though there was a sudden escape of accumulated tension that had built up so greatly it was going to burst.

Strong weight movements in free flow, such as those seen in African dancing are the types of movements that speak to my soul. The poly-rhythmic qualities of African dance make it so exciting for me to watch. I love the energy and the spirit that stems from African dance. The connection between drummer and dancer adds on another layer of community within the dance form. They challenge each other, push each other to go harder and faster. Although there are certain stylistic elements that need to be paid attention to, I feel that there is no right or wrong way to do it. Each person embodies the steps in their own way. I love the challenge that African dance presents for me, pushing through the cardiovascular challenge that it presents. Being able to freely move my torso, hips, popping the ribcage open and closed, stomping and flexing my feet, circling my head, while tossing my limbs, provides a sort of freedom for me that is unavailable in any other technique I have studied. The high energy of the movement along with the free flow quality, and the low weight provides for me the perfect movement experience. It feels totally unrestricted, is extremely athletic, and is complex in its use of musicality. The nature of the drumming with multiple players playing multiple parts corresponds directly with the movement. While the arms are moving on the upbeat, the feet may be moving on the down beat, while the torso is articulating to something in the background of the music that is barely audible.

I truly appreciate movement that highlights points in the music that you would not have been cognizant of had an accented gesture not corresponded to the sound. Often times when you hear of piece of music there are things that you are unaware of. When you see movement layered over the music its then that you hear a "ding" or a drum that you were not aware of before. I love when the movement improves upon your experience of the music, opening your ears to things you had not heard before. Or when the movement intensifies a sound that was already very audible, but the movement on top of it makes it that much more intense. In Sonya Tayeh's work she often pairs strong weighted movement, with strong striking sounds within the music. Her work is highly musical, following the flow of the music

For me, a dancer that has simply mastered a dance technique is not someone I would pay to

watch. It is the intent and intensity of their performance that appeals to me. I value a dancer that can quickly call upon their technical ability when needed but can also experience moments that are not bound by the rules and regulations of codified techniques. I love a dancer that can represent pure human movement, and evoke raw human emotion. The use of dynamics and choreographic elements that are a result of the combined genius of the choreographer as well as the great intelligence of the dancer, allow me to be excited as a mover because of my knowledge of the challenge it presents, and as a viewer because of the communication of truth it provides. Dance that seeks to challenge the norm by defying natural human movement

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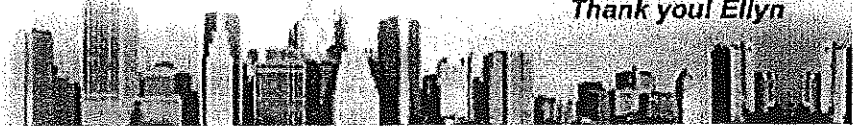
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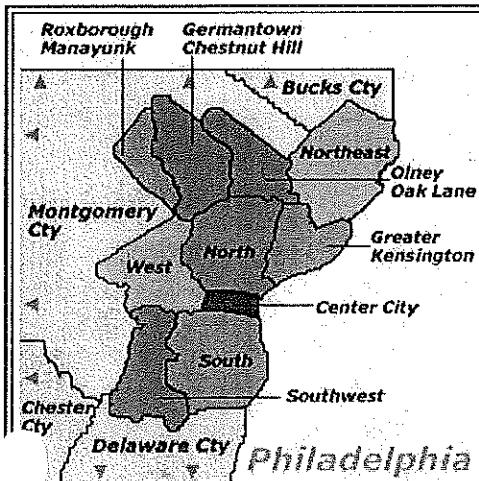
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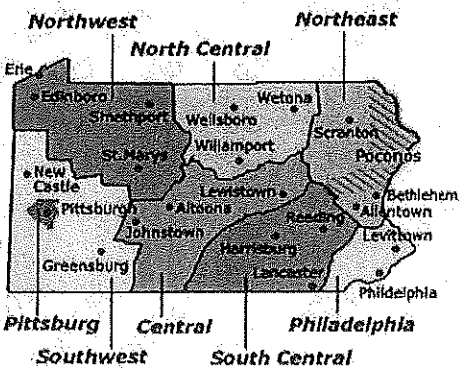
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Chi Movement Arts Center is the home and school of **Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers (KYL/D)**, a **501(c)(3) non-profit corporation**. All donations support the operation of KYL Dancers Inc. are fully tax deductible. KYL/D's educational program will offer the South Philly community year-round classes for all ages and levels in dance, yoga, Pilates, Tai Chi, creative movement and spiritual teaching. We support all movement practices that balance BODY, MIND, SPIRIT and CREATIVITY in a focused, accessible and intelligent manner.

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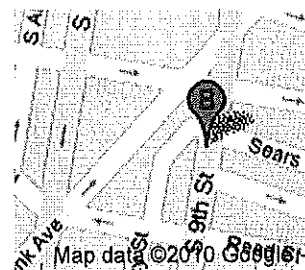
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- To advocate for dance as an art form and vital component of our culture
- To increase the capabilities of dance artists and organizations
- To enhance the public's awareness and support for dance

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Through concentrated programming designed to move young emerging dancers forward on their dance career paths, PHILADANCO's Instruction and Training Program has two primary tracks that provide skills development and performing opportunities for youth with varying levels of aptitude who have demonstrated the desire for a professional career in dance.



INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING PROGRAM:

From September through June, this 40-week program is designed to cultivate pre-professional dancers, providing them with tools to become successful professional dancers. Teachers from across the nation provide training in core dance genres such as ballet and modern dance techniques. Participants are given free dancewear, counseling and participate in the annual Danco on Danco Concert, in which they are able to showcase their talent.

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This 6-week program provides 5-days of training in 6 different dance genres such as African, Hip Hop and Jazz. During the months of June, July and August, young pre-professional dancers are introduced to the rigors of dance with special teachers and instructors. Summer program participants travel to local PHILADANCO performances seeing firsthand the working infrastructure of a professional dance company.

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Our Story

Mission Statement

Kimmel Center Inc.'s mission is to operate a world-class performing arts center that engages and serves a broad audience from throughout the Greater Philadelphia region.

The principal means by which the Kimmel Center achieves its mission include:

1. Operating and maintaining world-class performance venues including the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts and the Academy of Music.
2. Providing state-of-the-art venues and support facilities for its resident companies and a broad range of other regional performance groups at below costs.
3. Presenting artistic programming of the highest quality that serves diverse audiences and brings world-renowned artists to Philadelphia.
4. Providing vital arts education and community programming to serve the interests of a broad and diverse audience.

History

Kimmel Center, Inc. began to take shape in 1996 when two projects came together: The Philadelphia Orchestra's ongoing plan to build a new home for itself, and a plan of then-Mayor Edward G. Rendell to provide a much-needed venue for some of Philadelphia's most prominent performing arts companies and for touring presentations. With the generous consent of the Orchestra, which had acquired a property at Broad and Spruce Streets, the two plans were merged under the supervision and management of a new organization, the Regional Performing Arts Center (RPAC).

Today, Kimmel Center, Inc. incorporates public amenities and two major venues: The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts -- Verizon Hall, a 2,500-seat concert hall and Perelman Theater, a 650-seat recital theater; and a renovated and upgraded Academy of Music (2,900 seats), which is owned by The Philadelphia Orchestra and operated by Kimmel Center, Inc.

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Kimmel Center, Inc.'s facilities host eight resident companies: Verizon Hall is home to The Philadelphia Orchestra and to Peter Nero and the Philly Pops®. Perelman Theater is home to PHILADANCO, The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, The Philadelphia Chamber Music Society and American Theater Arts for Youth. The Academy of Music is home to the Opera Company of Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania Ballet.

Also see:

> [Building the Center](#)

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PhiladelphiaDANCE.org

Philadelphia's most comprehensive site and resource for dance.

PhiladelphiaDANCE.org has been established as a comprehensive web site for dancers, dance companies and dance resources in the greater Philadelphia Region. It offers a range of free online resources from promoting performances, classes and workshops, to offering discussion groups on everything from choreography to funding sources, and includes all dance styles from ballet to hip hop, as well as covering such topics as health and fitness for dancers and locating supportive services from photographers to dance agents. This site was implemented to unite the dance community as well as provide a vehicle for promoting dance in the region to the public.

NEWS & UPDATES

[Support dance in the region by becoming a PhiladelphiaDANCE.org Visa rewards card holder!](#)

Support our efforts with a donation in any amount.

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THE DANCE JOURNAL

Most recent posts...

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[THE NEW FESTIVAL's 7TH Annual Summer Intensive](#)

[Two Visions and Two Cities ? The Philadelphia/Washington, DC Exchange](#)

[An Interview with Charles Tyson, Jr.](#)

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DANCE JOB BOARDS

Dance jobs, auditions & Internships

[\[audition\] Brandywine Ballet to Hold Company Auditions, May 19, 2010 at Brandywine Ballet Company](#)

[\[job-post\] Elite Bucks County Dance School Seeking Professional Dance Teachers for 2010 -2011 Seasons at PSPA/SIMBT](#)

[\[job-post\] Dancers needed immediately for Contemporary Indian Dance choreography at phillydance123@gmail.com](#)

DANCE CALENDAR

Some Upcoming Events..

[05/06/2010 - City Dances Parkway II](#)

[05/07/2010 - City Dances Parkway II](#)

[05/07/2010 - Green Chair Dance Group's First Friday Dance Lab](#)

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DANCE CLASSES

On going class offerings...

[Pasion y Arte's May and Summer Flamenco Class Schedule!](#)
[May Classes PARD](#)
[NEW STUDIO - Hip-Hop, Jazz, Ballet, Pole, Yoga, Belly, Soul line, Ballroom/Latin](#)

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WORKSHOPS & MASTER CLASSES

Most recent offerings...

[Carbon Dance Theatre "The Ballet Experience" Workshop](#)
[West Coast Swing Master Class - Saturday 5/1, 3-5pm](#)
[Ohad Naharin teaches Gaga at Koresh April 27 - 30](#)

[Read more](#)

YOGA, PILATES & MORE

Most recent offerings...

[Power Yoga in King of Prussia](#)
[Pilates in Manayunk](#)
[FREE All Levels Jivamukti Vinyasa class At Shanti Yoga Shala](#)

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PHILADELPHIA DANCE TV

Latest dance videos posted...

["Making..." \(excerpts\)](#)
[BalletX Spring Series 2010](#)
[Dance, Dance, Dance!](#)
[Philly TAP Challenge 09 ON FIRE! pictorial review](#)
[Alchemy Dance Company - Introspection](#)

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DANCE BOX OFFICE

Now On Sale...

[An Evening of Duets](#)
[Subcircle - Only Sleeping](#)
[MarDelDance - This is My Story](#)
[Philly's Dance Collective](#)
[ContempraDance Theatre](#)

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NATIONAL HEADLINES

Most recent...

[Dance Becomes An Issue In UK's Close Elections](#)
[Will A Young Choreographer Attract Young Audiences To Royal Ballet?](#)
[Spain's New Ballet Company \(With ABT Roots\)](#)
[How Alley's New Leader Will Change The Company](#)

TICKETS NOW ON SALE ON DANCE OFFICE

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Arts & Dance Organizations

[Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance](#)
[Citizens for the Arts](#)
[Dance Advance](#)
[Dance Affiliates](#)
[Philadelphia Dance Projects \(PDP\)](#)
[Arts & Business Council of Greater Philadelphia](#)

More Resources

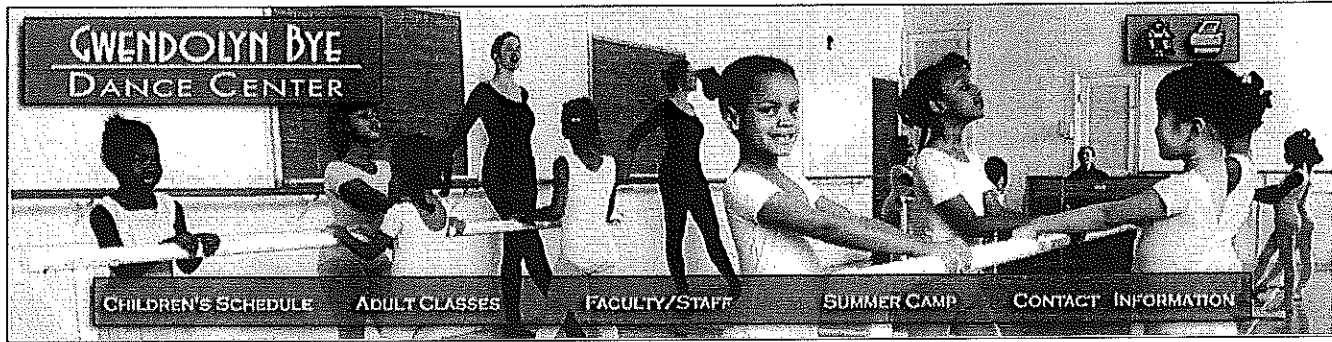
[Leeway Foundation](#)
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Recommended Sites

[Philly.com - Dance](#)
[Philly Fun Guide - Dance](#)
[Mascher Space Co-op](#)
[Chi Movement Arts Center](#)
[Community Education Center - CEC](#)
[954 Dance Movement Collective](#)
[Mt. Vernon Dance Space](#)
[Angler Movement Arts Center](#)
[Studio 34](#)

Dance Festivals / Series

[Live Arts & Philly Fringe](#)
[neW Festival](#)
[CEC - New Edge Artists](#)
[Illadeph](#)
[Philly Tap Challenge](#)
[ETC Series](#)
[Koresh Artist Showcase](#)
[INHALE Performance Series](#)



ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Gwendolyn Bye Dance Center On January 1, 2006 the dance training school known as the Gwendolyn Bye Dance Center, merged with Dancefusion as a new division of the Dancefusion non-profit organization. The Gwendolyn Bye Dance Center has year-round training classes for children and adults and is dedicated to the education and preservation of dance as a performing art; teaching at the highest standards, the many disciplines of dance to students who will make up our next generation of dancers, artists, patron and public; using dance as a bridge to cross cultural, social and economic boundaries.

Ms. Bye and her staff of internationally recognized teachers have designed programs to help students grow as young artists and develop a strong technical foundation while having fun. Students will learn self-discipline, concentration, self-confidence and an appreciation of the arts. Graduates of the school have gone into the dance programs of TISCH School of Arts at New York University, Barnard, Wesleyan, Temple, SUNY Purchase, NY, Vassar, Goucher and University of the Arts. They have also entered programs at Alvin Ailey American Dance Center, The Juilliard School, Paul Taylor Training Program, Arthur Mitchell's Dance Theatre of Harlem and The Pennsylvania Governor's School for Performing Arts. Admission reflects the high level of training students received from the Gwendolyn Bye Dance Center School of Performing Arts. The school also offers numerous opportunities to perform. Upper division is eligible to audition for Dancefusion's *fusion2*, a training ground for young dancers, made up of young dancers from the school, who perform throughout Philadelphia. All students, ages 3 and up may participate in the school's culminating annual performance in June.

December 2007, the School presented over twenty-five students in "Holiday Dances" at the Iron Gate Theater. The school re-staged two dances from the *Twelve Day's of Christmas* and engaged a Choral group, The Freedom Choir of Philadelphia to sing a medley of Christmas songs. The second part of the concert premiered a new work *The Angel of Christmas* by the newest member of our faculty, ballet teacher/choreographer Jorge Laico.

Scholarship Program - a limited number of partial and full scholarships may be awarded to students ages 9 to 18 who qualify and they are selected through an audition. Scholarships are based on merit and financial need. Applications are available and must be submitted to the office by the deadline. Application to this program does not guarantee an award. The scholarship program is Directed by Assata Hazell at the Gwendolyn Bye Dance Center, for more information please contact the office.

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email: info@gbyedance.org

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Artist Resources

This Resource Directory is the result of a 2004 Dance Services Steering Committee Survey of the Philadelphia dance community which was developed by DSSC members, Terry Fox, Director of Philadelphia Dance Projects, Teri Shockley, Director of the Community Education Center (CEC) and Melanie Stewart, Director of Melanie Stewart Dance.

We asked respondents to share contact information for the resources they used if they were so inclined. So for example, although no printers directly answered the survey, they may now appear as a resource as they were cited by a survey respondent. The resultant list then is not an endorsement, but rather it represents providers already in service to the community for better or worse. We anticipated that this would be a first step in creating a more comprehensive and useful Resource Directory.

If you would like to post a listing in this Directory, send it to info@philadanceprojects.org. We welcome your comments, additions or corrections.

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